



DRAWN FROM LIFE.

BY

ARCHIBALD FORBES,

SPECIAL MILITARY CORRESPONDENT OF THE DAILY NEWS.

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CHAPTER I.

ON their arrival at Euston Square, Mr. Home and Mary found their military friend waiting for them. He took them to his house in Eaton Square, and there they remained while the preparations incidental to their departure were being made. The General was a good deal about the Horse Guards, and also frequently had business at the big house in Leadenhall Street, where John Company was wont to rule in all his glory; but on the whole the time hung heavily on the old minister's hands. His

few simple preparations for departure were soon made; nor did those of his daughter take much longer time. But sailing orders were long of coming, and the two lived on in Eaton Square in an unsettled way, unable to compose themselves to anything, since they knew not what a day might bring forth. The old man did not like London. There was too much bustle, and hurry, and constant turmoil in it to suit a man of his retiring, contemplative disposition, and he longed after his quiet manse away in the Scottish hills. But his nationality had one treat during this period of waiting. The General came home one day early and told him he was going to take him a little way into the country. They drove to London Bridge Station, and went down to Greenwich by rail. After a stroll in the glorious park, where Mr. Home rapturously filled his lungs

with such air as he had never breathed since he had entered smoky London, they sauntered over the fine old Hospital, and gossiped pleasantly with the veterans sunning themselves on its terraces. By this time it was waxing toward evening, and the General, with some affectation of mystery, bade Mr. Home prepare for a surprise, and led the way in the direction of the Trafalgar Hotel. As they neared it, a strange yet familiar sound struck upon the old Highlander's ear. It was the strains of the Highland bagpipe, and the tune was the plaintive "Lochaber no more." Its shrill wailing struck straight to the heart of the old man, as he felt that indeed Lochaber and the hills and glens of his ain bonnie Scotland were no more for him. He felt "a lump in his throat," and verily the fountain of tears was stirred. Ah! cynics, you, may be,

sneer at the “shrieks and yells” of the bagpipes, and call their noise demoniacal; but these “shrieks and yells” have a wonderful power to stir the Highland blood to deeds of valour, and to evoke that *lam de pas* which is in the heart of every true Scot.

Passing by the stalwart piper blowing “wi nicht and main,” they entered the hotel, and yet another surprise awaited Mr. Home. He found himself in a room full of gentlemen, every one of whom was dressed in full Highland costume. He could hardly believe his ears as he listened once more to the old familiar Gaelic. As his friend introduced him to several of those present, he recognised in the names mentioned to him names which are household words in the North—Macphersons, Mackenzies, Chisholms, Colquhouns, Macdonalds, Macintoshes, Macleods, and Grants. He had not been in the

room five minutes before he found old friends —lairds, and the younger sons of Highland families, who had gone out into the world and thriven therein. Of one of these, a still stalwart old man, whom he had known in early days, while as yet both their forms were supple, and their hair untouched by the snows of age, he inquired what was the purport of the gathering which he saw before him.

In reply he was informed that it was the summer banquet of the Highland Society of London which was being celebrated ; and at the moment dinner was announced, and, with their piper playing in front of them, the company filed into the banquetting room. Mr. Home was requested by the president to say grace, which the honest minister, in the exuberance of his nationality, pronounced in sonorous Gaelic. It was his first

“fish dinner,” and, to say the truth, the multiplicity of dishes somewhat confused the good man. But he knew he was on safe ground when he saw the salmon ; and “the haggis” delighted him beyond measure. Then came the toasts. When the handsome bearded Highland gentleman sprang on his chair, and, with one foot on the table, shouted forth the cabalistic “Sios é! sios é! suas é! suas é! a nis! a nis! suidaibh! suidaibh! fhreamh!” the Highland heart of the old minister warmed mightily within him, and he, too, shivered his glass with a fervour unsurpassed by any. Nay, he even volunteered, when the next toast was given, to be himself the fogleman for the Highland honours, and he acquitted himself with a power of lung and a correctness of intonation which elicited general applause. Mr. Home had dabbled in poetry in his early days ;

indeed he had been guilty of the heinous sin of song-writing, and when the “auld Scotch sangs” were being sung by the vocal members of the society, this single-hearted old gentleman, in the fulness of his delight, volunteered to sing a ditty of his own composition. Goodness only knows how many years had elapsed since he last cultivated the tuneful muse ; nevertheless he got through his song capitally, and was enthusiastically applauded by the company. A Highland reel followed the dancing, in which some wags present tried to persuade the minister to join, but without success. While he was an enthusiastic Highlander, he never forgot his standing as a minister of the Church ; and indeed this request pained him not a little, since he imagined that it implied a possibility on his part of forgetting his cloth. But presently “Auld Lang Syne,” was struck up,

hands were joined in a circle, and to the old man that simple Scottish farewell was more of a prayer than a song. He and the General returned to town by road, and as he went to bed that night Mr. Home set up a white stone in his memory over that night spent with the Highland Society.

At last the "route" came, and, accompanied by their constant friend, the father and daughter went down to Southampton, and embarked on board the Peninsular and Oriental Company's good steamer, *The Punjaub*. Their fellow-passengers were of the usual order. There was the general officer, who had been nearly half a century in India, and who, having taken a run home to visit his youngest daughter, married to a retired covenanted servant, had been moved to take unto himself a third wife—young, beautiful, and prone to flirtation. The

leathery old gentleman was pitiably jealous; constitutionally of a fussy temperament, his fidgettiness now amounted to positive nervousness; he hopped and hovered about his pretty young wife, as you will see a tough old hen over the single chick which she has managed to hatch in her old age. There were handsome captains and majors of the Queen's and the Company's services going back to India after their furlough; and there were ensigns, cornets, and griffins, full of hope, of pluck, and of shyness. There were civil servants and indigo planters—two or three Scottish merchants in Calcutta—shrewd, hard-headed, kindly-hearted men,—a French missionary bishop, and a brace of doctors. The lady-passengers were as varied as the gentlemen. There was the “old campaigner,” who had been home, putting her youngest children to school, and who

knew India like a book from Peshawar to Cape Comorin. There was a tremendously august female, likewise, who was not indeed the wife of the Governor-General himself, but of somebody so close to him in rank as to strike awe into the bosoms of the rest of the passengers; and it was a special mercy that the great lady had a state cabin to herself. Several of the captains and majors had got married during their leave, and their wives accompanied them—pleasant fresh girls, who knew not to what they were blithely going. And there were some unmarried ladies as well—girls whose education had been completed in England, and who were going out to join their parents in India; and others, too, who were going out on consignment to some kind relative, but who had no intention of remaining longer than they could help under his roof. Be-

tween flirtation, lounging, dancing, card-playing, scandal-talking, and indolent reading, the voyage, with the break, in its midst, of the journey through Egypt, was wiled away. The low-lying banks of the Hooghly were visible one morning when the passengers came on deck before breakfast, the pilot was aboard, and soon the anchor was down opposite the "City of Palaces," the city which Havelock called "fit only for Government secretaries and Pariah dogs." The party on board the steamer broke up, dispersing in every direction, as if by centrifugal force. The great lady started direct for Simla; Mr. Home and his daughter went to an hotel, and next day, on application at the proper department, Mr. Home found that his destination had been fixed, and that he was to go up to his post almost immediately. Before leaving Scotland

the father and daughter had promised Lady Grant that immediately on arrival at Calcutta, they would have their portraits taken, and send them home to that worthy woman, as the most reliable indication of their condition after the voyage. There is no lack of photographers in Calcutta, and the proprietor of their hotel sent them to a countryman, who "took them off" capitally. Mary wrote a long letter to her friend, enclosing the portraits, and the minister wrote a shorter epistle to Sir Dugald. Then they went on board the steamer, and had a tedious, wearisome voyage up to Allahabad. From Allahabad they took dawk to Cawnpore, the station which was to be their future home.

CHAPTER II.

MR. HOME and his daughter arrived in Cawnpore about the latter end of the year 1856. The total change from everything to which they had been accustomed, while it confused and to some extent annoyed them, still was matter which drew their minds off more painful topics; nor was it long before they found among the European residents in Cawnpore not a few willing to be true friends and close intimates. Perhaps, for all his advanced age, the father bore transplanting the better of the two. There was work before him, and he set himself to do it. His cure was

not indeed a large one. Including officers, there were in station about three hundred soldiers of European birth ; the civilian officials, women and children, and the Eurasians, or half-castes, brought the total number up to about one thousand. Of these, however, David Home had comparatively a small proportion under his charge—only those who were of the Presbyterian persuasion ; but among the covenanted civilians, as well as among the soldiery, there were a good many from Scotland, and he found that to do his work thoroughly, as he had been wont to do it at home, monopolised the greater part of his time.

His daughter Mary, however, was longer ere she became reconciled to her strangely altered circumstances. The “manse,” as she playfully yet plaintively persisted in calling it, stood within a compound of several acres,

surrounded by a rough and crumbly earthen fence. Its position was not far from the head of the ravine which opens to the Suttee Choura landing-place, about midway between the latter and the chapel. The house was a one-storey high structure, built of brick, and smeared over with white plaster, with a broad verandah running round three sides of the building. In the aridity of this parched compound poor Mary terribly missed the flower-garden, to attend to which at home had been her dearest care. Surrounded by wallahs with every imaginable prefix, she longed for the sonsie face of the Scottish servant lass whom they had left behind ; and altogether, for the first month or two of their sojourn at Cawnpore, she may be described as having been very miserable indeed.

But a change came, although only a par-

tial one. She began to become intimate with the lady residents at the station, and shortly found them delighted to be kind to the beautiful young stranger. Her greatest friend she presently found in a Mrs. Moore, a charming and tender-hearted woman, the wife of a captain in the 32nd Regiment, and under her guidance she explored with no little wonder the sights of Cawnpore. Not that she found much to see in the cantonments themselves. These extended from a point on the river where the magazine stood (and including this important position), in a curiously crooked line, which, steering between the river and the native town of Cawnpore, struck the Ganges Canal, which it followed inward till the Allahabad Road was reached. Along this the boundary line ran for some distance, and then struck away at right angles to the road, and ran riverwards again.

The whole length of the cantonments was about six miles, and the direction in which they extended along the southern bank of the river was from north-west to south-east. Outside, and to the north-west of the cantonments, and some little way inland, were the public offices and the residences of the principal civilians ; and here, too, was the Mission Station, where David Home was well pleased to find congenial spirits. The portion of the cantonments which lay to the south-east of the Ganges Canal contained all the military, both British and native. Here were the barracks of the European infantry and artillery, and the lines of the native infantry and cavalry—long rows of mud huts built upon a framework of bamboo, one of which each Sepoy had to himself, and whatever family—often an extraordinarily large one—he might have. The bazaars attached

to the different native regiments were not fit places for exploration, teeming as they did with a motley, unruly, and degraded population. But the native town lying on the north-west side of the canal might be visited without a shock to the sense of decency, and although it contained nothing of any great architectural note, there was not a little of novelty in it to the eye of the stranger, and that, too, a girl unused to the spectacle of a large town of any kind. There was many a handsome shop in the long Chandnee Choke, or "Street of Silver," a boulevard over a hundred feet wide, and not undeserving of its name as a repository of jewelry. She saw the Brahminee bulls, fat and saucy, sauntering along the streets, eating whatever they pleased of dainties out of the open shops, and blinking knowingly at some shopkeeper trying to coax them

away from his own particular store with a platterful of grain. Death and damnation would be his fate were he to lift his hand against one of the sacred but uncommonly inconvenient animals. The life and stir and strange oriental habits of the Indian townspeople were all new to Mary, and the study of their peculiarities was a source of no little amusement.

Then there was the band-stand, around which, as the shades of evening began to fall, it was imperative upon all the Europeans in station, who aimed at a character for fashion, to assemble, and to chat, and flirt, and talk nonsense, and utter scandal. And there was an occasional ball at the Assembly Rooms, and a party now and then, and drives when the heat of the day was over, and her father to accompany occasionally, and some good to be done on her own account among sundry

Scottish private soldiers' wives and their children ; so that, on the whole, Mary Home began to find her time in Cawnpore hang not so very heavily on her hands after all.

One day her friend Mrs. Moore called upon her, bringing her a card for a grand entertainment which the Maharajah of Bithoor (a gentleman who afterwards became tolerably widely known as Nana Sahib) was about to give to the British residents at Cawnpore. Mary Home was difficult to prevail upon, but Mrs. Moore was not to be denied.

“You really must promise, Mary; the Maharajah is one of the pleasantest men you can imagine; not like some of the native princes, who ask us English to come to their palaces only to stare at us through a lorgnette as they lie on a heap of cushions. No; the Maharajah is quite a different

person. He is too fat to dance, poor man, but he walks among his company, and chats with the young ladies, drinks champagne with the old ones, flatters, bows, cracks jokes, and altogether makes himself uncommonly agreeable."

"I should like to know," replied Mary, with some simplicity, "what sort of a man he is, though. Is he a good man?"

"Well, we are not supposed to know much about that, you know. There are some queer stories about him, it is true; but everybody accepts his invitations, and for my part I think a good deal that is told about him must be lies, for I have been at Bithoor often and often, and there is never anything to be seen there but the greatest propriety. He has been badly used, by all accounts, by the Company. He is the adopted son of a certain dead Mahratta

Peishwa, who was called, I think, Bajee Rao. When Bajee died, the heir put in a claim for the pension the Company allowed the old gentleman; but very unjustly, as most people think who know anything about native customs, which I don't profess to do, this was refused. Well, after failing with the folks down at Calcutta, he thought he might do better if he were represented at home, and he sent to England his secretary, a very clever fellow, called Azimoolah. It was my first season in London—1854—and I remember quite well what a lion was made of the Maharajah's secretary. He started as a prince on his own account, and having lots of impudence, and knowing how to lie—as what Hindoo does not?—Azimoolah created quite a sensation in London, and was in great request at many aristocratic assemblies. He had to come back to Bi-

thoor, however, without gaining his master's point for him ; and if you go with us next week you will see the gentleman who made so great a sensation in May-fair."

"If he failed in getting the pension continued to his master, how does the Maharajah contrive to maintain the state you say he does?" asked Mary.

"Oh!" replied Mrs. Moore, "he is as rich as a Jew—ever so much richer indeed—without that. He inherited, or managed to get hold of, all the property of the old Peishwa, and that was reckoned at above six millions sterling. So you see he can afford to be free-handed and hospitable; and I assure you he is both. He thinks nothing of giving every lady, when going away after an entertainment like this next week, the present of a splendid Cashmere shawl; and when he has a bachelor party, which he is very fond of

(and he gives the men rather too much wine, my dear), he seldom lets his guests go without giving each a turquoise or a diamond ring. He is a wonderfully well-informed, clever, shrewd fellow, I assure you; and if you live at Cawnpore, and don't go to Bithoor, you are losing one of the not very many pleasures which we have here—away from home and friends as we are. So I shall certainly keep pressing you, for your own sake, to consent to accompany me next week; and when Mr. Home knows that you are going along with me, you may be sure he will not have any objections."

So Mary consented to go with her friend to the entertainment which the Nana Sahib was going to give to the English residents at Cawnpore.

CHAPTER III.

THE embarkation of a detachment so small as that of which a draft usually consists is not an affair of so much magnitude or importance as when a whole regiment, *omnibus impedimentis*, takes ship for foreign service; but nevertheless Hector saw enough to interest him greatly, and in some measure to distract his mind from the desponding thoughts which not unnaturally had possession of him.

On arriving at the railway-station, the first order was to lay aside arms and assist in the piling of the baggage upon the trucks which were prepared for its reception. This oper-

ation was a somewhat complicated one, by reason of the fact that two married women, Mrs. Malony and Mrs. Macgregor, whose acquaintance Hector had previously made at the depôt, were to accompany the detachment. These good ladies had never been abroad before, although there were few barracks in the United Kingdom with the married quarters of which they were not acquainted ; and they evinced a strong propensity to take with them as many mementoes as possible of their native shores. Mrs. Macgregor, honest woman, had manifested that concentrativeness which is a feature in the character of the nation to which, as her name betokened, she belonged. She had packed up in a great piece of canvas sheeting a certain feather bed, which, as an heirloom from her remote ancestors, she was fond of boasting of and parading ostentati-

ously, when the other married women of the regiment were fain to sew two regimental palliasse covers together and get them filled with straw. In the capacious bosom of this family relic she had stowed a variety of minor articles, the chief among which were a washhand-jug of some primeval china, an antiquated whisky-bottle—which, trust Mrs. Macgregor, was quite empty—a cradle, sundry volumes of Gaelic literature, and a small assortment of cooking utensils. It happened that in consequence of the rough treatment which this bulky mass had received at the hands of unappreciative railway porters, it burst its cerements on the Gravesend platform, and Mrs. Macgregor was very nearly reduced to a condition of despair in consequence of the apparent impossibility of reuniting her scattered household gods.

As for Mrs. Malony, again, she had never made an attempt to collect her goods and chattels at all, but had bundled them into the luggage van in a chaotic state. Her great stumbling-block was her inability to perform that difficult operation—carrying her belongings “in her head;” and after she had collected on the platform a large pile of incongruous articles, she was still in a bewildered way investigating into the whereabouts of a birdcage and “a few other little throifles.”

As these two worthy ladies are to be the companions of our hero on his voyage to India, it may be worth while to devote a line or two to describe them, especially as they may be taken to be typical of two different species of that class, the private soldier's wife, whom our philanthropists, while sending “gospel pocket-handkerchiefs”

to cannibals and proselytising among barbarians, think proper in a great measure to ignore. Mrs. Malony was a little, slatternly, pock-marked Irishwoman, of a very uncertain age. Her normal condition was that of a nursing mother—nobody could remember the time when Biddy Malony had not a brat hanging at that bosom of hers, which she was wont to wrap in an old red woollen kerchief. Biddy was a merry soul ; although she had many a trial and many a cross, somehow they never seemed to make their way further into her than the pockmarks. She was always ready with a bit of Irish humour—just as ready as she always was for a glass of gin, to which, indeed, she was, to put it mildly, remarkably partial. She didn't make a bad wife to old Dan Malony, her husband, who in truth was not over-particular about seeing his wife tidy and his

corner of the room clean, providing he always got enough to eat and the price of his two pints every night at the canteen. The men whom she "did for" liked her, notwithstanding that, when they were in a fastidious humour, they occasionally reported her to the captain for negligence in plate-washing and superficiality in shirt scrubbing ; for she never took offence at anything unless she saw it was really meant for an insult, and then her Irish blood had a habit of boiling, and she had uncommonly long nails. But Biddy was a good soul to recruits while as yet the poor young fellows did not know how to walk alone in the rough highways of barrack life, and gave them many a piece of quaintly sensible advice, which they did not forget when they had found their feet. After all, slattern, free-and-easy speaker, and ready drinker as

Biddy was, she was a decent body at bottom, and let those who are disposed to sneer at her think what they themselves might have been in her circumstances.

Mrs. Macgregor, again, was a lady of another stamp. She was a Highlander to the core, and had all the merits and all the faults of the type of which she was a representative. She was a tall, gaunt woman, with a black eye, a Roman nose, and remarkably few words. Nobody ever accused her of not doing her work to the very letter of the law, and nobody ever accused her of being of an amiable temperament. Still she was not unpopular among the men of the regiment, although the women hated her like poison. She had always a few shillings in her pocket, and she would lend them willingly enough to accommodate men who had once proved themselves worthy of

trust ; but he who did not repay to the day wasted his breath when he asked Mrs. Macgregor for a second loan. Her temper was hot, but her heart was warm too, especially towards a countryman, and our friend Hector was a particular favourite with this somewhat termagantish lady. It may be added that her muscular strength was immense, and her nerve remarkable. She had once pulled a recruit from under a kicking horse when not a dragoon in the troop dared to interpose.

When at length these two specimens of the fair sex had got their belongings, animate and inanimate, collected together, and had taken their departure down towards the pier—Mrs. Malony hung all over with bantlings in various stages of infancy, Mrs. Macgregor stalking gauntly along with her solitary olive branch by her side—the very youth-

ful cornet who was in command made the attempt to gather together his little charge, preparatory to embarkation. The task was not an easy one. When he had mustered as many as remained on the platform, he still found himself short by a considerable number; and while he was routing stragglers out of the refreshment rooms, other stragglers were breaking off to public houses outside the station entrance. He had to go through this unsatisfactory see-saw process more than once before he at length contrived to bring them all together; but at last he got them successfully under weigh, each man with his valise under one arm, and his carbine under the other. When Mick fell into position at the side of Hector, the latter expostulated with his chum on the evident devotion he had been paying to drinking rather than to baggage-loading.

“Arrah, now, Heckthor,” was Mick’s candid reply, “sure, an’ if ye wor lavin’ a darlint av a young woife behind ye, it’s yerself would be glad to take a dhrop to dhrown care. I said good-bye to the crature last night, an’ throth, I thought she would have burst hirsilf wid cryin’. Bedad, Heckthor, an’ I’m half inclined for to take me hook, an’ lave the ould corps altogether. I would, too, by jabers, only they’d pin me for a desarter before I had got away. Och, Heckthor, the purty, beautiful crature, that I’m so swate upon, and faix, so is she upon me, intirely. Be gorra, and there she stands!”

Sure enough, standing there in the crowd, weeping as if her heart would break, was Mick’s poor little Canterbury wife.

“Hould me carabine, Heckthor jewel, for a minute, till I give her wan kiss,” pleaded poor Mick; and Hector, sympathis-

ing enough because a not unkindred feeling was tugging at his own heart-strings, was fain to consent.

With a sudden spring Mick was out of the ranks unobserved, and inside the dense crowd which opened to receive him as if by intuition. Hector thought he had merely gone just to snatch a final parting and return again ; but he reached the jetty still carrying the two carbines, and yet no Mick made his appearance. Here was concentrated a considerable portion of the aboriginal population of Gravesend, mingled with a small infusion of visitors from other places. The Gravesend people had assembled in obedience to a custom which has become second nature with them—to

“ Welcome the coming,
Speed the parting guest ;”

while the strangers for the most part were

there to take leave of some relative or intimate friend among the outward-bounders. Tears were falling, hearty kisses were being given and taken, hands were being shaken fervently, and a partial and premature attempt at a cheer on the part of sundry small boys was baffled by the over-prevalence of sobs. But poor Hector stood amidst the partings, friendless, alone—in a deeper solitude in this crowd than had he been in the centre of a desert. The past flashed across the mental vision of the lad—the happy days of his boyhood—the wistful yearnings of his early manhood—the repulse which withered his young life. What had passed since then was a blank to him. He saw nothing beyond that evening when under the Highland moon he had pressed Mary Home to his heart. Had Hector 'listed in war time, he might ere this have

learned how wounds with the raggedest edges are the pronest to cicatrise, and, after all, how slight a scar the healed wound leaves ; but he was only a youth, and his hurt was very green still. Does it detract from his manhood, then, that, on the Gravesend jetty, where tears were rife, Hector, too, dropped his silent tear? The grizzled old staff-surgeon who was to accompany the draft, was using his pocket-handkerchief with suspicious frequency as he turned away from a stout matron with a tolerable display of olive branches around her. There were wives of poor wretches who had married without leave—as our friend Mick had done—weeping hopelessly on this jetty, as they thought of the thousands of miles which were to part them from those whom, spite of the Horse-Guards, they were just as much entitled to call husband as you, my

lady, are entitled to call the gentleman who is toasting his slippers on the fender over against you. Ay, and there were weeping women here who had not even the sorrowful consolation of calling themselves wives. And boys were cheering, and hawkers were crying their wares, and a brass band was playing, and officers were swearing, and half-drunken recruit-soldiers were singing a dirty ditty, and heart-strings were being wrenched, and the work of embarkation was going on in a somewhat unmethodical, but tolerably brisk way.

Hector had little to detain him on shore, and he reached the *Lady Octavia* in the first tug-load. On mounting to the main deck, he found Mrs. Macgregor and Mrs. Malony already there—the former grimly defiant by reason of a request just made to her by a sailor for grog, the latter in a semi-hysterical

state, having lost a shoe, a washtub, and, she much feared, one of the young Malonys. Hector succeeded in calming her as regarded the latter apprehension, having discovered the young bogtrotter snugly ensconced in the manger of the ship's cow, where he calmly explained he had been dropped by a nigger sailor, between whom and the "divvle" he considered, in his boyish innocence, that a striking resemblance existed. The shoe was gone beyond remede, having been dropped into the sea when its owner was stepping on to the gangway; and just in the nick of time Mrs. Malony remembered that she had given the washtub as a keepsake to a "greengrosher's lady" in the depôt town. This satisfactorily settled, Hector deposited his kit in a spare nook at the foot of the mainmast, and mounting the topgallant fore-castle, set to watching with some interest

the embarkation. At last all were on board, it was believed. The loafers and shore-goers were routed out of the ship, and the orderly sergeant, a parade having been summoned, proceeded to call the roll of the draft. All answered to their names save one—that one was Hector's unfortunate chum, Mick Sullivan. As the sergeant and the officer in command were holding a hurried colloquy with regard to this circumstance, a terrific shout was heard on the quay, which drew the attention of everybody in that direction. There stood honest Mick, swaying backwards and forwards in a decidedly inebriated condition, his little wife hanging round his neck, and he hailing the ship over her shoulder. Behind the pair was a sympathising crowd of females, blubbing away in melodious concert, with here and there a wilder screech of woe issuing

from the throat of some tender-hearted countrywoman of Mr. Sullivan. A couple of policemen hovered in the offing of the crowd, distracted apparently between their anxiety to show their zeal by apprehending Mick, and that innate delicacy Nature has implanted in the policeman-bosom, heightened perhaps by a salutary dread of the "ladies in waiting." After a little delay, Mr. Sullivan was safely brought on to the quarterdeck of the *Lady Octavia*, where he stood before his officer in an attitude intended to represent the rigidity of military attention, contrasting comically with his tear-stained face, his inability to restrain from a frequent hiccup, and an obvious difficulty in preventing his knee-joints from serving their owner treacherously.

"Well, Sullivan," said the officer, with an affectation of sternness which, under the

circumstances, was beyond all praise, "what do you mean by this conduct?"

"Plase, sur, an' big yer parrdon, sur, but I didn't mane ounly to fall out for jist one partin' drap, sur. It wasn't the dhrink at all, at all, sur. It was the grief that kilt me intirely. Sure, sur," added Mick insinuatingly, "it's yersilf, yer honour, that's left, may be, a purty crature wapin' for yer handsome face."

Mick always kissed the blarney-stone extensively when he was in his cups. The officer managed to keep his countenance while he informed Sullivan that he "considered him a drunken beast, and that he had a good mind to put him in irons;" a threat which, had the good-natured young officer obeyed rigorously the orders transmitted from the general inspecting the departure, would assuredly have been carried

into effect. As it was, Mick was permitted to find a quiet corner to sleep off his beer.

But quiet corners in the *Lady Octavia* this night were very scarce. Everything was in a state of chaotic confusion. Mrs. Malony was to be heard bewailing the fact that the married people's quarters were "undher thimm bastes of sailors." The men smoked and talked, and now and then sang a song, as the tug hauled the good ship further and further out into the estuary of the Thames; and then wrapping themselves in their cloaks, with their kits for pillows, went to sleep wherever they could find a vacant space to lie down in.

On the morrow, however, the work of making things ship-shape went on rapidly. The purser of the ship rapidly served out sea kits, and the quartermaster-sergeant took charge of the land kits and saw to the stow-

ing away of the swords and carbines and belts, to remain in big chests till the voyage was over. Hammocks were assigned to the men by number ; cooks were told off to the galley, a regular guard was set, and before night the whole ship was put in decent order. The order of things in a troop-ship is very methodical. The trumpeters sound the various calls just as on shore. It is strange to hear on the bosom of the great deep the sound of the *reveillé* echoing away across the waste of waters in the early morning. The 'tween decks is set apart for the soldiers—the single men inhabiting the centre, and sleeping in hammocks slung stem and stern at a distance of six inches apart ; the married people inhabit a spot under the forecastle, boarded off from the rest of the 'tween decks, and furnished with bunks like an emigrant ship. The ham-

mocks are stowed away in the morning and re-slung at night, and along the centre of the 'tween decks are fastened low tables, at which the soldiers take their meals. These meals consist of cocoa and biscuit for breakfast, pea-soup, salt meat, and occasionally preserved vegetables for dinner, and tea and biscuits in the afternoon. These viands are cooked in a galley specially set apart for the soldiery, the cooks being tried, good hands, put in for the voyage. The day is spent in a listless, aimless fashion. Immediately after all the hammocks are "up," there is Doctor's Inspection, at which every man parades with bare feet and arms. Then follows breakfast, after which there is a parade, and if possible a spell at drill, it may be "suppling motions," or a bout with the dumb-bells. After dinner there is, if possible, another short drill, and then idle-

ness till evening, when the band plays (if there is a band) on the poop, and the soldiers and sailors have a spell of dancing on the main deck, the officers often joining and making great interest with the married ladies to become their partners.

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CHAPTER IV.

THE *Lady Octavia* had been but a very few days out of port when Hector Macdonald was made lance-corporal for the voyage, and placed in the store-room as assistant to the purser. His chum, Mr. Sullivan, was in a state of high glee when he heard of this.

“Be jabbers, Heckthor me boy, shure it’s oursilves will live on the fat of the land now intoirely. Ye can snake any amount of good things, me son, and that surly ould cheeseparing nigger, the purser, will be divil a ha’porth the poorer. Shure all the prog belongs to Government, and it’s mesilf

is sartain that Government niver knows to a million of gallons of rum or so hwhat it's worth. I've got an illigant bladdher in me kit, Heckthor, and if ye'll bring it out of the stores full of rum every night, we'll be able to make oursilves quite comfortable in thim infarnal hammocks."

His hammock was a standing grievance with poor Mick. He had nearly brained himself the first night by his attempts to get into it, jumping clean over it and falling at the other side ; and happening to waken in the night and sitting up without thinking, he would have stove in his head on the cross-beam if it had not fortunately been tolerably hard. He had tried to sleep on deck in one of the boats, but the mate of the ship had unceremoniously routed him out of that haven of refuge ; so Mick had to face the ordeal of the hammock every night. He was

considerably surprised when Hector refused his little request to fill the "bladdher" every night, and gave him to understand that he would assuredly "cut the loaf" if ever Mick proposed anything of the kind again. For his life Mick could not recognize the sense of this. "Sure," he said, "it wasn't like robbin' a comrade or an ould woman that the loss would hurt; he wouldn't aven rob the baste of a commissary if he had to stand the racket of the loss himself; but everybody robbed the Government, and Heckthor's honesty would be no savin', for some other blackguard would be sure to have double for that raison;" and from this position, which is a fair specimen of the standard of honesty prevalent among soldiers, Mick could be in no wise driven, but continued till the end of the voyage to believe his chum a perfect Don Quixote of scrupulousness.

Mr. Sullivan had received ten days' punishment-drill, as an infliction for his embarkation escapade. This he was inclined to be very jocular over. Mick had plenty of experience of punishment-drill, which in barracks consists of some four hours a day's tramping of the gravel, with valise strapped on shoulders, belts, arms, and full accoutrements, making up a weight of nearly a hundred pounds. The punishment-drill on board ship differed very much from this, consisting, as it did, in perambulating the decks for a given time entirely unincumbered with any of those *impedimenta* which so seriously aggravate the penalty on shore. It was great fun, particularly when the ship was tolerably lively. When she gave a roll, the defaulters would roll to, if possible up against the orderly-sergeant who was drilling them ; and it is a noteworthy fact on board a troop-ship

that defaulters are always the last to get their sea-legs. But when the evening dancing began, and his comrades were jigging away merrily, while he and one or two more were at punishment-drill out of sight of the fun, Mick began to realize that it was a "botheration swindle, entoirely." The festivities were carried on under difficulties, chiefly for want of music. The draft had but a solitary trumpeter on board, and he was an old fellow whose wind had given way, and who, when in the ranks of the band, was relegated to the triangles or the cymbals. But he had been a trombone or an ophœ-clide player formerly, while his bellows were good, and he was still wont to practise on the instrument. Accordingly when a hunt was made for musicians, a few days after leaving port, old Sam was the sole representative of the fraternity to be found ; and he

brought out a complicated weapon, consisting of several yards of brass formed spirally, with a huge bell mouth, in the interior of which Sam (who was a very little fellow) was popularly supposed to sequester himself occasionally from the public gaze. For lugubrious music this instrument was probably all that could be desired ; but for anything of the character of a brisk tune, say a jig for instance, the length of time which the notes took to work through the spirals operated detrimentally, since Sam was finishing a tune at one end, when the commencement was just issuing from the other ; besides which, there appeared to be internal communication between the spirals, which resulted in a somewhat heterogeneous jumble. A committee was sitting with a project before it for shortening the distance between the mouthpiece and the orifice of Sam's in-

strument, by amputating some of the brass extravagancies, when Mick bethought himself of an idea whereby he might at once get out of the remainder of his punishment drill, and be installed in a position of honour, and tolerable likelihood of occasional "dhrops of dhrink." Hector had told him that he had seen lying neglected on a shelf in the store-room a violin which appeared to have been there for an indefinite period. Now Sullivan was a capital fiddler, and it struck him he might utilise the information through the medium of an interview with the "baste of a purser." He had, however, to use some finesse, since he had become somewhat obnoxious to this individual, from the frequency with which he had reported the rations of his mess. Judging his time, he stepped up to that official as he was standing at the break of the poop, smoking a con-

templative cigar over a glass of ship's rum.

"Beg yer parrdon, sur, but moight I have spaich wid yer honour?" was Mick's inquiry.

"Oh, you're the grumbler, ain't you?" responded the purser; "what have you got to growl about now?"

"Och, niver a thing at all, at all, sur," said Mick insinuatingly; "it was my mistake, sur, all the time, sur. That cook, sur, is not fit to cook for a pig, the crayture, and he would spoil the best mate ever cured. The biscuit is beautiful, yer honour, an' as for the rum," said Mick, with a sly glance at the purser's glass, "sure it's deloightful."

That officer was touched. He handed Mick the glass, with permission to empty it, which the astute Patlander did with much condescension, and the dialogue proceeded.

"It's a pity entoirely, sur, that you gin-

tlements can't have no better music than could Sam's big serpent; a fiddle, now, yer honour, is beautiful to dance to."

"Yes, man," said the purser, "but when there is neither fiddle nor fiddler, what is the use of talking?"

"Bedad," replied Mick, "it's yourself, sur, that can find the fiddle, an' it's meself that can find the fiddler."

The officer demanded an explanation, which Mick accorded to him. The pair adjourned to the store-room, where the violin was duly discovered, and its bow was found also, in a corner. Mick set to work, cleaned and tuned "her," and in an hour's time he was playing to the delighted purser "The Wind that shakes the Barley." That officer was congratulating himself upon the credit he would obtain when he should bring his *protégé* on to the poop in the

evening, and surprise everybody, when Mr. Sullivan interposed with a lugubrious shake of the head, and informed him that his hopes were fallacious, as he (Mick) would be walking punishment-drill at the precise moment of the purser's anticipated triumph. This was a temporary damper, but the matter ended, as Mick anticipated, in his being accorded a full pardon as regarded the remainder of his punishment ; and he was installed musician in ordinary to the *Lady Octavia*, a position which he held with high credit till Madras Roads were reached. His strains bewitched all on board to become votaries of Terpsichore, with one exception. Mrs. Malony might have been seen any night footing it deftly with a young Malony in her arms, and a gigantic black sailor for her *vis-à-vis* ; but Mrs. Macgregor, for the national reason that Mick was unable to

play strathspeys, refused to join "the mazy throng," although pressed very ardently by many, who, in their eagerness for a female partner, were not particular, in the dearth of such, as to either youth or good looks.

The voyage, on the whole, was tedious, and very uneventful. The *Lady Octavia* had a share of bad weather, it is true, during which her 'tween decks were a Pandemonium; for it was necessary to keep the hatchway down, as she was what was technically called a "wet" ship. At the height of the storm, Hector, having occasion to enter the married quarters on some errand connected with rations, could not help smiling to see Mrs. Malony on her knees in a corner in an agony of terror, engaged in alternate supplications to innumerable saints and in slapping her family, which was rolling miscellaneously about the deck, and,

when the ship gave an extra roll, getting occasionally jammed up in the corner in a complicated heap, the disintegration of which was only to be achieved by a lurch the other way. Grim Mrs. Macgregor was sitting on her bunk watching, in a very Cameronian spirit, the effusive piety of her comrade; and as Hector passed, she drily remarked—

“Losh, man, heard ye ever siccan havers oot o’ ony ’sponsible woman’s mou’? Gin onything happen, I wunner if a’ thae lang-nebbit birkies she’s cryin’ tae, or a guid life-presairver, wad be the maist use.”

However, nothing *did* happen; and perhaps Mrs. Macgregor was not sorry that her speculation as to the comparative value of saints and life-preservers in cases of shipwreck remained undetermined.

During the long voyage, Hector borrow-

ed a Hindustanee grammar, and with the assistance of the chief mate of the ship, who was a proficient in that language, made considerable progress in it. He tried to persuade his chum to set about learning it as well, but that eccentric individual positively refused. He said he was already master of two languages, Irish and English, and since, as regards them, his tongue had an awkward knack of getting him into trouble, "he'd be hanged if he wanted to know any other lingo, for if he didn't know it, sure, there was no fear of his getting into throuble for swearing at the nagurs." In process of time the voyage of the *Lady Octavia* drew to an end, and she at length cast anchor in Madras Roads.

CHAPTER V.

THE station at which the 30th Light Dragoons were lying was Bangalore, some distance in the interior of the Madras Presidency. The draft, which included Hector, spent very little time in Madras, but were forwarded almost immediately after disembarkation. On arrival the newly-joined men were speedily brought into the orderly-room and submitted to the critical examination of the assembled officers. Except in a few cases the comments were not very favourable. Hector got an approving nod from the colonel, and even the adjutant had nothing to say against his setting up and

carriage. Sullivan was recognised at once, but, truth compels the avowal, with no great cordiality. The remainder of the squad was in truth not a very bright lot, and the colonel looked gloomy, the adjutant held up his hands and damned depôt drill under his breath, the regimental sergeant-major smiled a smile in which lurked club drill and suppling motions, and the riding-master muttered something about "half-baked tailors." The men were drafted into the different troops and sent off to amalgamate with their new comrades. The report from the officer in charge of the draft was so favourable to Hector, that the colonel for once broke the rule and confirmed him in the lance-rank of corporal, to which he had been promoted on board, with the promise that it would speedily be converted into substantive rank if his conduct deserved it.

Soldiering in India, Hector and Sullivan were not slow to discover, differed very materially from soldiering at home. Their idea of a barracks was derived from the workhouse-like piles of building with which they had been familiar in Britain—huge blocks with stone staircases, and room piled above room three or four storeys high. But they speedily found that barracks in India meant something very different from this. In the first place, they found no barrack wall and no barrack gate with a sentry guarding it, as at home. This feature caused Mr. Sullivan to express an opinion that it would be an easy matter to break out of barracks, which subsequent experience indeed confirmed, but only to demonstrate that the exploit was a futile one, seeing that once outside there was no place to go to. The barracks consisted of a number of long

buildings one storey high, placed in mathematical arrangement, so that no one stood directly in front of another, and thus a free current of air swept through the buildings from front to rear. Each erection consisted of a long room with brick walls and a heavily-thatched roof, which projected all round in a wide verandah supported upon wooden pillars.

The doors entered under this verandah, and Hector thought there was at least no scarcity of those conveniences. In the room to which he and Sullivan were told off (for, as luck would have it, they were both drawn for the same troop), he found two windows in each gable, and two windows and a door alternating all along both sides. Between each door there were two cots, not however the iron cots to which he had been accustomed at home, but primitive affairs, con-

sisting of three wooden planks resting upon iron trestles. Above each cot, on a peg, hung the saddle and bridle of the dragoon who owned the cot; on another peg hung his arms and accoutrements, and above these again was his kit. Although it was mid-day when Hector entered this long apartment, he found most of its occupants lying on their cots, some reading, others asleep, and others lying listlessly, unable to go to sleep, and bored for want of anything to do.

The entrance of the strangers created a languid stir. Men rose and stretched themselves, and then lounged up to where Hector and Mick had sat down, to inquire about what was doing at home when they left it. The two corporals amicably fraternised with Hector, and Mick very speedily found two or three of his countrymen, and

retired with them into a corner, out of which a gushing torrent of brogue speedily proceeded. In the midst of the palaver it became dinner-time, and the new-comers had an opportunity of seeing how feeding is done among soldiers in India. There is no "messing together." The allowance is what is known in the army as "pound and pound"—that is, a pound of bread and a pound of meat. No white man does any cooking in India. There are a certain number of native cooks—men of the lowest castes, allowed to each troop or company, and paid so much per month, generally a rupee, by each man for whom they cook. Your native cook takes your pound of meat in your own peculiar "jamboo" (a copper mess kettle), and treats it in whatever way his own ingenuity or your suggestion may prompt. Thus, one man dines off a stew, another off

a curry, a third off a plain boil, while a fourth may luxuriously discard his ration meal altogether, and gourmandise on "fowl." Besides the cooks there are four boys allowed to each troop for fetching the food from the cook-house, carrying their beds and food to the guard-room of those men who are on duty, and making themselves generally useful in a variety of ways.

When the heat of the day moderated, Corporal Macdonald, along with one of his new-made non-commissioned acquaintances, sallied forth on the tour of investigation. Proceeding toward the front, they reached, having cleared the barracks, an open space used as a parade-ground, on the margin of which was the guard-room, occupied by the quarter-guard. A sentry was pacing up and down under its spreading verandah, and inside the guard were lounging upon their

cots, which the mat-boy had fetched for them from their respective rooms. It was explained to Hector that there were three other posts for the day guard besides that outside the guard-room door—one on each flank of the barracks, and a third in the rear in front of the officer's mess-house. Traversing the parade-ground, they reached the lines where the horses were piquetted. For there are no troop stables in India; all the year round the horses stand in the open air, just as the visitor to the Curragh or to Aldershot may have seen during the brief summer period, when some cavalry regiment is under canvas in one or other of these favoured spots. A mud wall was the first thing Hector saw. Behind it were the horses tethered to uprights, and their hind legs fastened by heel ropes to pegs stuck in the ground. Hector was much surprised at the

contrast these Indian troop-horses presented to the big-boned, high-standing animals he had been used to at home. Their coats were so short and fine, that it seemed almost as if they had no hair on them at all. They were extremely narrow, low in flesh, ewe-necked, with no shoulder to speak of, and game small heads, with terribly vicious eyes. Everyone was a stallion; and their lives seemed to be spent in shrieking and snapping at one another with their angry white teeth, and in making abortive attempts to fight with their fore legs and kick with their hind ones. Altogether Hector did not like the look of them at all, and almost regretfully thought of the old "Bonesetter," which, with all her faults, did not feel quite like a rat between a man's legs, as he was sure these brutes did, nor was she of so fiendish a disposition as these demoniacal

stallions appeared to be. He was not at all sorry when his brother-corporal informed him that most of his business with them would be simply to ride them, since a coloured individual, known as a "Syce," did most of the little work in the way of grooming, &c., which these fine-coated animals required. They were fed, he was told, upon grass, which was cut daily by native grass-cutters, a certain number of whom were told off to each troop, and upon "gram," a species of pulse, a supply of which was collected and boiled every evening, under the superintendence of a non-commissioned officer, whose special duty it was to see to this.

There was not much more to be seen; at the back of the barracks was a row of troop cook-houses. Behind them again was the mess-house of the officers, and studding the

plain irregularly in the rear of it were the bungalows of the officers. The natives who in such numbers attach themselves in one capacity or other, and sometimes in no capacity at all, to every regiment in service in India, dwelt in wattled huts around and outside of the radius of the barracks; and there was at some little distance off a native bazaar, out of which Hector had no difficulty in seeing it was very advisable that every soldier who had any regard for character and health should keep as much as possible. On their way back to their barracks Hector and his friend encountered the irrepressible Mrs. Malony, who was searching about miscellaneously for somebody with whom to lodge a complaint about the accommodation, or rather want of accommodation, which had fallen to her lot. It appeared that by some mistake she had

found her way to some native hut instead of the married quarters. She found this little dwelling choke full of individuals, whom she contemptuously denominated "nagurs" of all sizes and ages, and she had made a vigorous but vain attempt to cleanse the Augean stable. She had lost two of the young Malonys and a considerable proportion of her goods and chattels. She had been "thrated" by somebody or other with a glass of arrack, which, it appeared, had not agreed with the worthy lady. Hector's companion helped her to find her husband, Dan ; and Dan, in his quiet, phlegmatic way, speedily put the "ould woman" to rights somewhere.

On their way back the two corporals looked into the canteen. Here they found Mr. Sullivan, who, by a species of natural attraction, had gravitated thither in company

with some of his countrymen. Mick had less objections to the taste of arrack than had Mrs. Malony. Indeed, he was noways particular about his tippie, so long as he had plenty of it; but he was in a condition of bewilderment with regard to the allowance system which prevails in Indian canteens, and felt much aggrieved that he was not at liberty to treat his comrades to the top of his bent with his sea-pay, which he had taken all in a lump. In the midst of Mick's grumblings, the evening stable-trumpet sounded, and it was now Mick's turn to express disgust at the "craytures" which formed the stud of the gallant 30th. He was still more disgusted when, at five o'clock next morning, he came to mount one of the animals. For some reason or other the "devil" of the troop was assigned to Mr. Sullivan. The interesting quadruped made

strenuous efforts to worry him while he was saddling and mounting; but at last Mick got on him, and it was an old boast of his, that “onst let him get outside ov a baste, and thin he didn’t care for the best horse that ever was foaled.” The “devil,” however, brought Mr. Sullivan’s boasting to shame. As it happened, he was a cross between the native Arab-bred horse and an imported Australian. From the Arab original he had inherited his temper, his ewe-neck, and his total want of shoulder, which latter peculiarity made his back an inclined plane, without a bit of purchase for the rider’s knee. From the Australian strain of blood he derived an agreeable propensity of buck-jumping, which of itself, without the accompaniment, to use an Hibernicism, of want of shoulder, is an accomplishment invariably productive of grief to the unaccustomed

rider. Mick did his best, but his best was fruitless. He stuck on longer than had been expected; but at last he went to grass over between the "devil's" ears, that playful quadruped making a grab at a certain portion of Mick's body as it passed in tempting proximity to his teeth. Mick was up and on again, only to experience another discomfiture; but this time he survived a little longer, and by the time the morning's exercise was done, although it required a good memory to remember the number of times he had been thrown, he had mastered the art of sitting a cross-bred Indian "devil," and had cowed the savage into undemonstrative sullenness. Hector's horsemanship was not so severely tried; but he at first experienced, also, an unpleasant feeling, as if he were astraddle of a rail instead of a horse, and had to exercise vigilance to prevent him-

self, when there was a sudden check, from slipping over his horse's rabbit-like forehead.

In his capacity of lance-corporal Hector was soon called upon to take charge of a guard under a sergeant. On one of these occasions it was mentioned in the guard-room that a new officer had arrived in the course of the day from Madras. The troop to which Hector belonged was short of a cornet—that is to say, a cornet had, as Hector understood, been gazetted to it; but this event had taken place when the draft to which he belonged was on the voyage. The new officer, as a matter of course, joined the *depôt* first, and would, no doubt, come out overland when he had learned his drill. So, when Hector heard of this new arrival, he naturally concluded that it was the cornet come to fill the vacancy in his own troop. The matter was not one of any importance

to him in any sense, and beyond a cursory hope that the new comer would turn out to be a decent fellow, he gave no further heed to it. At eleven o'clock at night he marched out the reliefs for the various posts, and happened to be changing sentries at the post situated in front of the officers' mess-house, when the merry party of officers broke up. Laughing and chatting they came out under the verandah—a little merrier than usual, perhaps, this night, because a new man had joined, and had no doubt paid his footing in the usual dozen of champagne. As the foremost group passed Hector, a voice, which he somehow thought he knew, caught his ear—an unfamiliar voice, yet one which stirred within him a memory of the days before he wore the Queen's uniform. The halt of the relief at the mess-house post afforded him an opportunity for something

more than a passing glance, and while the sentries were changing he gazed into the group, as the officers lounged past him in the half-light, with earnest inquisitiveness. Arm-and-arm between two subalterns, his face inflamed with drink, his mouth full of slang, rolled the son of the cotton lord, the moneyed cad Fitzloom. As he grinned his horse-laugh, Hector could see the vacuum in his row of upper teeth which his fist had caused that morning when they last met; and now this man was his officer. The eyes of the two met, and Fitzloom gave a sudden start and seemed about to speak, but, controlling the impulse, he smiled a silent smile, the triumphant insolence of which was bitterer to Hector than would have been a blow. And as the lad marched his relief back to the quarter-guard, a sickness of the heart came over him, a bitter consciousness of de-

gradation which he had never felt before. Verily, his enemy had triumphed over him ; and Hector knew the man's disposition too well to doubt that he would forego one jot of the sweet revenge of humiliation.

CHAPTER VI.

H ECTOR had not been with his regiment long before his lance rank was converted into substantive rank, and he was now a full corporal. Mr. Sullivan and he, ill-assorted pair as one would imagine they were, still remained chums, since Hector had not, in being promoted, been transferred out of the troop which he originally joined. Mick was not fond of India. "Och, be jabers," he was wont to exclaim, "it's a dead an' aloive place entirely. Sure an' hwhat's the use of goin' out at night, whin there's divil a thing to be seed at all, at all, but a pack of supple-jinted haythens dodgin'

about a durty ould bazaar? Show me the spot in all India that can touch the ould Royal Barracks up by the Dublin esplanade. And sure that's the place for a dhragoon! If he want's a quiet sing-song, isn't there the 'Fox'—Saturday and Sunday alike, bedad—up beyant the esplanade, or the 'Glass House,' on the quay, or—but what the divil's the use of pratin' about Dublin in this scorching hole? Where's its could porther, avick, or the beautiful dandy of Irish whisky, my jewel? Och, the divil a sup of anything can ye get here outside the canteen but the rotgut arrack and a bottle of beer for a day's pay." So Mick confined his bacchanalian exploits exclusively to the canteen. Even here he was, to quote his own language, "in the doose an' all of a hole." A sergeant is appointed to a canteen in India, whose duty it is to serve every man

with a certain allowance per day and no more. Two drams of arrack and a quart of porter is the authorised maximum, and the tally is kept by a system of pegs. Mick devoted himself habitually to circumvent these pegs by a variety of dodges, in which he was frequently more successful than was good for him.

The orderly sergeant of Hector's troop was unwell, and it fell to his duty to act in his place. In this capacity he had to go to the orderly-room in the afternoon, copy the orders for the next day, read them to the troop at the evening stable parade, and then take his order-book to the bungalows of the different officers of the troop for their information. The part of this duty which was most distasteful to Hector was the necessity it involved of a daily interview with Mr. Fitzloom. That gallant officer lost no op-

portunity of throwing every possible slight upon the young corporal, but was careful not to allow his annoyance to be of a nature which would justify any formal complaint. But it was insufferably galling to the young Highland gentleman-corporal to be kept standing at attention for ten minutes, order-book in hand, till such time as Mr. Fitzloom thought it worth his while to lay aside his book, or to desist from pulling his terrier's ears. Sometimes Mr. Fitzloom was in his bed-room, and on these occasions Hector had to wait his officer's convenience, while that gentleman took particular pains never to hurry himself.

More than once during these periods of waiting, Hector had noticed how ostentatiously careless Mr. Fitzloom was with his personal property—watch, money, &c. A handful of money, or a gold watch and chain,

he frequently saw lying on the table, amidst spurs and gloves, and soda-water bottles and tumblers, and the idea had struck him that Mr. Fitzloom might have been thus careless with the design of throwing temptation in his way. The morning after one of these waits in Mr. Fitzloom's sitting-room, Corporal Macdonald was down at the lines parading a squad for riding-school drill. While the men were turning out and mounting, the regimental sergeant-major came upon the scene, and, to the intense amazement of Hector, that burly non-commissioned officer addressed him with the words, "Corporal Macdonald, you will consider yourself under arrest. Go to your room!" In abject bewilderment, Hector requested an explanation, but could obtain none. All the satisfaction he could get was a peremptory repetition of the order to go to his room. There

was, of course, no alternative but to do so ; and Hector accordingly, scarcely knowing whether he was on his head or his heels, walked slowly into his barrack-room. When he reached his cot, he casually noticed the circumstance that his valise had been pulled down off the shelf and opened, but in the disturbed state of his intellects the circumstance, which at another time would certainly have surprised him, excited but little attention. He was sitting on his bed, trying to think what possible charge he had been put under arrest for, when a sergeant came to summon him to the orderly-room. Entering this dread sanctum, Hector found the old colonel sitting in the Windsor arm-chair with the discipline book open before him, the adjutant standing behind him, and Mr. Fitzloom and the sergeant-major of his own troop standing between them and the

door. The colonel was a stern, but a just man. He had seen so much of soldiers during his long experience that he had ceased to believe very much in anybody—still he never condemned till a case was clearly proven. Raising his eye from the book as the sergeant brought Hector in, he said, in a grave tone, that he was sorry that a charge of so heinous a nature should come against a young soldier who had hitherto conducted himself so creditably. Hector very naturally replied that he had not the slightest idea what the nature of that charge was. The old colonel shot a keen glance at him as he replied,

“Corporal Macdonald, you are accused of stealing a gold watch and chain, the property of Mr. Fitzloom. What have you to say to this charge?”

The words struck Hector like a blow

from a stick. His head swam, and for a moment he thought he was going to faint. The next, the blood came back to his heart and flushed up into his face as he looked the colonel straight between the eyes and answered,

“It is a wicked falsehood, sir!”

“Then, of course, you deny it?” was the colonel’s response.

“I do, sir, if it were the last word I had to say on earth.”

“Mr. Fitzloom,” said the old soldier in a dry, business tone, “will you state what you know about this matter?”

Thus adjured, Fitzloom briefly, and with a certain glib nervousness, stated that after Corporal Macdonald had left his quarters on the previous evening, he had missed his watch and chain when dressing for mess. Knowing his own carelessness, he at first

thought he had mislaid it, and went to mess without it. That morning he had renewed the search unsuccessfully. He had previously had reason to believe that he had missed money from his table after Corporal Macdonald's evening visits with the orders, and this more serious loss confirmed him in the idea that the corporal was the thief. He had communicated his suspicions to the sergeant-major of the troop, who had at once searched Corporal Macdonald's kit, with what result the sergeant-major would himself state.

The sergeant-major for his part had only to say that, having been spoken to on the subject of his loss by Mr. Fitzloom, he had taken another sergeant-major with him and searched Corporal Macdonald's valise. Stowed away in his hold-all, he had found the missing watch and chain, which he had

at once brought to the adjutant. The adjutant produced the jewelry, which he had docketted.

While this evidence was being given, Hector's state of mind was first bewilderment, and then a growing conviction that Fitzloom was the author of the villainous device. But what bootied this conviction? The evidence was strong enough to hang a man. The old colonel looked compassionately on the lad as he said,

“Corporal Macdonald, the case seems very clear. What you have to say, if anything, you must say elsewhere. It will be my duty to send you back for a general court-martial.”

And so Hector was marched out of the presence, and taken to a room adjacent to the quarter-guard, where he was left with a sentry over him.

It was weeks before the commander-in-chief's order came for the court-martial. That worshipful court assembled listlessly in the officers' mess-room. A flogging colonel was the president, and its composition was chiefly of men who, when they had been ordered for it, d——d it for "a cursed baw," and were heartily anxious to have it over, that they might get away to a pic-nic. They yawned and took the oath in a devil-may-care way, and looked supremely indifferent when the prisoner was brought before them. Fitzloom and the sergeant-major gave the same evidence they had done before the colonel. When the first had done, the President informed Hector that he was at liberty to cross-examine the witness. Bitter mockery! But Hector thought he saw a ray of hope in the permission. He began—

“Mr. Fitzloom——”

“You must put your questions through me,” broke in the President, “not address the witness directly.”

“I wish, then, to ask Mr. Fitzloom whether he has any feeling of ill-will to me—any grudge?”

“Quite ridiculous, prisoner,” said the President. “Can’t put such a question. It has no bearing on the case.”

“May I ask the witness, sir,” said poor, badgered Hector, “whether he remembers an encounter which took place in Scotland between him and me?”

“What next, I wonder?” exclaimed the President in hot wrath. “What the devil has Scotland got to do with Bangalore, or with the watch and chain found in your kit?”

“A good deal, sir,” said Hector, “if you

will but allow me to put the question."

"Nonsense, prisoner. If you can in cross-examination do anything to break down the facts just sworn to, you may. If you can't (and I don't see how you can), you'd better give it up. One thing I can tell you, you are doing yourself no good by the course you are taking."

Foolish Hector lost his temper.

"Your permission to cross-examine," he exclaimed with passion, "is nothing better than a farce."

"Perhaps!" answered the President with a grim smile. "Perhaps you may not have cause to think our right of punishment a farce. Call the next witness!"

And so Hector fared in his attempt to cross-examine.

Then he was called on for his defence. He had written one—a long, elaborate docu-

ment, setting forth the reasons he had for believing that Fitzloom meant him evil, narrating the rencontre in the glen, and the blow and unfulfilled threat of a challenge. He had written down all this, and had meant to read it, following, as it would have done, upon what he had thought to extract from Fitzloom on cross-examination. But that cross-examination had been peremptorily burked, and Hector saw how futile it would be to make the long statement, even if, as was doubtful, he were permitted. So in a few sentences, which were continually interrupted by the President as introducing irrelevant matter, he asserted his innocence—his total ignorance of how the watch and chain came into his valise, and his strong reason to think that his accuser was at the bottom of what he designated as treachery. He had known Mr. Fitzloom in

other days, he said, and they had parted, while as yet both were civilians, in hot blood. And then he had done.

One of the captains who was on the court-martial woke up at this stage from picking his teeth with a paper-cutter languidly, to suggest that—"A-aw, egad, there seemed something doosed pecooliar about this case, and that he had a notion, aw, that it was doo to his friend Fitzloom to give him an opportunity of contradicting these dayvilish libellous assertions." So Fitzloom was called in and interrogated, whether he had ever been acquainted with the prisoner before joining the regiment; whereupon Mr. Fitzloom emphatically swore he had never seen Corporal Macdonald in his life to his knowledge before the day he joined the regiment; and the captain, who had fallen back on his teeth-picking amusement, mut-

tered hazily that—"A-aw, this was doosed satisfactory," and seemed to think he had done a good stroke for the honour of the regiment.

The adjutant gave his evidence as to character, and then Hector was led back into confinement; and he lay there many days, while the finding of the court-martial was being submitted to the commander-in-chief. At length, one evening, honest Mick Sullivan brought him his tea down as usual (he never would let the mat-boy take his chum's meals), and having set it down, he stood looking at Hector with a strange concern in his honest eye; and then he broke silence.

"Heckthor, me lad, it's me heart is bleedin' for yez. I've got bad news to tell yez."

"Say away, Mick; I'm well-nigh careless what comes next."

"Ah! but, honey, it's a savare blow en-

toirely. Yer court-martial is to be read to-morrow morning."

"Ay," said Hector, carelessly.

"Ay, chum, and—" here Mick lowered his voice to a whisper—"the farrier-major has got the ordhers to rig the thriangles."

"What!" shouted Hector, jumping to his feet, his face like fire. "What say you?"

"Faith, me boy, it's only too thrue. It's to be flogged ye are, Heckthor, a-cushla."

"Go away—leave me," said Hector, almost fiercely; and poor, honest Mick, who saw what little service his consolation would be here, heaved a sigh, shook his chum by the hand, and went off.

It was a sleepless night, that, for Hector. Flogged! The very thought was maddening torture. He, a Macdonald, and an innocent man, to be flogged like a dog! At

first he thought of suicide, but his natural courage and his sense of religion soon exorcised this demon. But he did pray for death—ay, for death—that night, and that with all his heart and soul. But death came not—but instead, the morning. And with the morning came Mick, with a bottle of brandy that he had compassed somehow, and which he beseeched Hector to drink, for it “would kill the pain.” It was with difficulty that Hector gave him to comprehend his contempt for Dutch courage.

“Everybody primed themselves,” said honest Mick, “before a flogging, and why shouldn’t Hector?”

But Hector wouldn’t, and then Mick, poor fellow, produced his last mark of kindly attention in the shape of a leaden bullet which he had beaten flat, and which, he averred, held tight between the teeth, helped greatly

to prevent a man from "hollerin out" when the cat fell. This Hector accepted—not that he had any intention of using it—but to humour the solicitude of his faithful chum.

At length the escort came. The sergeant directed the arrangement of Hector's garments, and with a cloak thrown over his shoulders, the latter fell into his place between the files. Marched up into the riding-school, he found assembled there two troops of the regiment, a knot of officers, among whom was Fitzloom, surrounding the colonel, who held the court-martial documents in his hand, the doctor, the farriers, each with his cat, and the triangle rigged against the wall under the gallery. The sergeant of the escort took his cloak from him, and ordered him to take two paces to the front and take off his cap. And there the lad stood waiting for his doom.

“Proceedings of a general court-martial,” the Colonel began, reading in a loud voice off the sheets of paper. The document seemed interminable to Hector. At last the end came. “The court, having considered the evidence brought before it, finds the prisoner, No. 420, Corporal Hector Macdonald, guilty of the said charge of theft, and does hereby sentence the prisoner, No. 420, Corporal Hector Macdonald, to be reduced to the rank and pay of a private dragoon—” here the colonel paused for a space, and then went on—“and, further, to undergo the punishment of fifty lashes.”

The regimental sergeant-major approached Hector, and with his penknife ripped the gold lace stripes from his arm, and cast them upon the tan. Then the colonel’s stern cold voice uttered the word “strip!” There was a little momentary bustle, and Hector half-

hung, half-stood, lashed by the wrists and ankles to the corners of the triangle, while the farrier-major stood measuring his distance, fingering the whipcord of his "cat," and waiting for the word—"Begin!"

Suddenly a wild shriek pealed through the great building from out the gallery above the head of the man who was waiting to be flogged.

"Arrah mushra, colonel dear, for the love of the Holy Jasus and the Blessed Vargin, hould yer hand, and spare an innocent man. I tell ye he's innocent, and it's mesilf, Bridget Malony, that can prove that same. Och-one, colonel dear, listen to me, will yez?"

All eyes were concentrated on the little gallery. It was a sort of crow's nest, built out from the wall, about the height of ten feet, and had an access only from the outside. Leaning over the balustrades, dressed

in nothing but a chemise and a petticoat, her hair streaming wildly over her shoulders, and with a round bald place on the top of her head, which gave her a most extraordinary appearance, was Mrs. Malony. She had had a sunstroke the day Hector was put under arrest, and had been in hospital ever since.

Almost everybody thought her mad, but Mrs. Malony had something to say, and was determined to say it. She had just finished her impassioned adjuration when she cast a hurried glance behind her, and then, indifferently clad as she was, nimbly climbed over the balustrades, and dropped upon the tan. At that moment a couple of native nurses rushed into the balcony. Straight up to the colonel ran Mrs. Malony, and broke out again into vehement speech.

“I tell yer honner the carpral’s as inno-

cent as the babe unborn. He is, so help me God! There's the rapscallion of a thraitor," yelled she, pointing a long bare skinny arm at Fitzloom; "and there's his snakin' tool," and up went the other arm like a danger-signal pointing at the sergeant-major. "Hear me shpake, sur," cried the woman, "and sure I am ye'll belave me."

"Nonsense," said the colonel, "you are mad or drunk, woman. Take her away," and he beckoned to the nurses.

But the major, a Scotchman, intervened.

"At least hear her story," argued he. "There must be something in all her vehemence. I know her. She is no liar."

"Say on, then," said the colonel.

"But first," interposed the major, "Captain Curtis, conduct Mr. Fitzloom outside; and, Sergeant-Major Norris, take charge of Sergeant-Major Hope, and keep the two apart."

Then Mrs. Malony told her story. She had been "doing for" Mr. Fitzloom, she said, ever since he joined. The day before Hector was put under arrest, while she was in the lumber-room of Mr. Fitzloom's bungalow, she had overheard the plot concocted between him and the sergeant-major. Early next morning, while the regiment was out at watering order, she had watched Sergeant-Major Hope go to Corporal Macdonald's kit, open out his hold-all, and therein place Mr. Fitzloom's watch and chain. Two hours after, while she was on her way to the bungalow of the "praste," to ask "his riverence" what was best to be done, she was struck by a sunstroke, and was insensible for some days. When she recovered consciousness, she had forgot everything that had happened for a day and more before her accident till that morning, when she

accidentally overheard the nurses gossiping among themselves that Corporal Macdonald was going to be flogged that day for stealing Mr. Fitzloom's watch and chain. Then everything flashed vividly on her mind, and she had made her escape, and come on the scene just in time.

Mrs. Malony spoke fast, and her story did not occupy more than a few minutes. At its conclusion, the colonel turned to the sergeant of the guard and ordered him to unfasten the prisoner, and take him back to confinement. While Mrs. Malony had been speaking nobody had noticed him, and when they went to loose him they found he was in a faint. The parade was dismissed, and the colonel, the major, and the adjutant went to the orderly room, and directed Mr. Fitzloom to be brought before them. He met Mrs. Malony's statement with a flat

denial, and desired, with some insolence, to know whether they would take the word of a crazy old Irishwoman before that of an officer and a gentleman? "That depends on circumstances," was the colonel's dry comment, as he formally put him under arrest; and having ordered him out, called for the sergent-major to be brought in. This man was rather a poor rascal—nothing like so consummate a scoundrel as was his commissioned confederate. He was ghastly pale, and his knees trembled under him as he flinched under the colonel's searching eye. On cross-examination he broke down altogether, and at length, with many protestations of remorse, confessed the whole truth, and that Fitzloom had bribed him heavily to help him to ruin Hector. This excellent specimen of a non-commissioned officer, in his turn, was sent off under close arrest, and Mr. Fitzloom was re-summoned before the conclave.

It was a frightful scandal for the regiment, and the two field-officers determined to hush it up, if possible. So Fitzloom had the option of going for a court-martial, or of sending in the resignation of his commission within an hour, and quitting the station before the day was out. Then and there he wrote out that document, made a sarcastic sweeping bow all round, and walked off to his bungalow. On his way he met Hector, just liberated by the colonel's order, coming away from the guard-room, surrounded by a knot of troop-mates, conspicuous among whom was Mick Sullivan, half mad with delight. As Fitzloom skulked past the group with a baleful scowl, the trammels of discipline for once were snapped, and a terrific groan made him quicken his pace, for fear of some evidence of popular feeling more practical still. In two hours more he was clear of the cantonments.

CHAPTER VII.

“ I FANCY, Miss Home,” remarked handsome, cheery Captain Moore, “ you will find our friend the Maharaja scarcely like that fine old fellow, Sir Dugald, you are so fond of talking about.”

The three, Captain and Mrs. Moore and Mary Home, were in one of the Nana’s carriages, which he had sent to convey them to the fête at Bithoor. The Nana was a hospitable man—fond of seeing “ his friends,” as he called the English residents at Cawnpore ; and when he gave an entertainment, which was very often, he thought nothing of sending carriages—and carriages, too, of the

newest European style—for his visitors. The drive to Bithoor was about twelve miles, and when our little party got within two miles of it, they found the road studded at short intervals with posses of the villanous-looking retainers whom the Nana, in common with most Eastern magnates, was fond of keeping in his retinue. These became closer as they got near Bithoor, so as almost to line the road during the last quarter of a mile. Each man held in his hand a coloured lantern, such as frequenters of the old Vauxhall-gardens were familiar with, and the chains which enclosed what may be styled the approach were hung with the same ornaments. The Palace of Bithoor was a curious architectural medley. Splendid pillars, with noble pediments and finely-carved capitals, were surmounted with great staring spaces of woodwork, painted of a

bright blue ; a handsome window, all of a glow with stained glass, was set in the midst of a flat plain wall of rough brick work.

The carriage drove up to the main entrance, which was under a portico, the pillars of which were formed of polished marble. Fountains plashed on the space outside it ; the sparkling water, as it was heaved upwards in jets and fell in broken cascades, flashing in warm tints as the rays of parti-coloured light from the painted lanterns struck upon it. The native coachman pulled his Arab stallions up with a jerk ; the kitmaghars tumbled off the perch behind and let down the steps ; and a guard of honour of hideous ruffians, armed diversely with quaint brass blunderbusses and long matchlocks, the stocks of which were spangled with glass beads and the muzzles fashioned into the semblance of a dragon's mouth, presented

arms clumsily as the party alighted. Nana Sahib was not like some of the Eastern potentates. He did not lounge on his divan, and content himself with listlessly staring at his visitors. Not he. Overflowing with courtesy, he welcomed the stranger to his halls on his own threshold ; he was as supple polite as his obesity permitted. For Captain Moore he had a shake of the hand and a hearty salutation in Hindustanee ; his lady was greeted with a smile, half jocular and half obsequious ; while he claimed the honour of a special introduction to the stranger “ Missey.”

By no means an ugly man was the Nana—rather prepossessing, indeed, at first sight. He was, indeed, fat even to grossness ; and the fat was of that pasty, flabby character which is so widely different from our hearty muscular John Bull corpulence.

But the gorgeousness of his flowing eastern attire took off the unpleasant effect in no small degree, and, belted with a gorgeous cashmere scarf, with a sword of state stuck in it, which was one glowing mass of sparkling jewels, and was currently reported to be worth three lacs of rupees, he looked every inch a prince. Mary's eye was so caught at first with the splendid tiara of diamonds which circled his closely-shaven head, that she did not for an instant or two find time to exercise what skill in physiognomy she possessed ; but when she did, she was certainly pleased rather than otherwise with the expression of the Nana's face. It was pale to sallowness, except where the swarthiness of the closely-shaven upper lip contrasted with the palor of the rest of the countenance. His face partook not in the slightest degree of the fulness of his figure.

The features were thin and very strongly marked; but the chin was much more massive than is usual in the Hindoo physiognomy. It might be that there was an infusion of Tartar blood in the Nana, for the eyes, although deep set and piercing, were placed obliquely in the head—a characteristic we are wont to associate with that race. But it may give a better idea of this peculiarity, to say that they resembled the conventional Mephistophelian eye we are all familiar with; and the bushy slanting eyebrow helped this. His smile, although rather too frequent to be genuine, was not unpleasant; and on the whole, to the superficial observer at least, the Nana seemed a shrewd facile man of the world, with nothing sinister in his aspect, and certainly nothing at all repulsive.

Although too stout to bow with any grace,

there was a certain dignity in his gestures as he did the honours of his entrance-hall, and conducted his guests to the open door of the principal saloon. This was a splendid and spacious apartment, adorned with gorgeous mirrors and an infinity of gilding. The Maharaja, however, although he spared no expense, could not purchase taste. An exquisite statuette stood on the same marble slab with one of those common stoneware figures which we see gracing the mantel-pieces of humble cottage homes. Gaudy prints of the German school occupied prominent positions, and fine copies of the old masters were thrust into out-of-the-way corners. A doctor's invalid chair in shagreen had for its *vis-à-vis* a Parisian fauteuil mounted in maroon velvet. A trashy Yankee clock stood on the table inlaid with lapis-lazuli. The champagne glasses which the

dusky waiters presented to the guests were of different patterns, and the ices were served in silver egg cups.

The Nana came no further than the entrance to the saloon ; other guests were arriving, and he was impartial in his civilities. Accordingly he handed our little party over to his master of the ceremonies, the courtier Azimoolah, whose experience in the salôns of Mayfair rendered him, in his own opinion at least, a past-master in the art of ingratiating himself with the fair sex. He was an old friend of Mrs. Moore's, and when the captain took himself off to join a party of gentlemen who were enjoying champagne cup in a corner, she, taking Mary along with her, called on Azimoolah to escort them through the reception-rooms, and point out to the strangers whatever was most worth looking at. This task, which

was quite to his mind, Azimoolah performed with much *empressement*, and when passing the rich curtain that hung over the entrance to a small apartment which might have been meant as a boudoir, it seemed as if he bethought himself that an opportunity was afforded him of ventilating his acquaintance with the ceremonial of formal introductions. Politely raising the curtain, he bowed the ladies into the little room. Two gentlemen were sitting there in earnest conversation. One both Mrs. Moore and Mary knew as a besotted wretch, who, although a cashiered officer, still lingered in Cawnpore, bordering chronically on *delirium tremens*; in his companion, Mary recognised, with abhorrence and intense surprise, none other than Mr. Fitzloom, junior.

Azimoolah managed to effect with due formality the introduction between Mrs.

Moore and Mr. Fitzloom; but the latter broke in abruptly on his repetition of the formula.

“Oh,” said he, with a swagger, and approaching as if to shake hands, “Miss Home and I are old friends—are we not, Miss Home?”

“I believe,” answered Mary coldly, “that we have occasionally met.”

“Occasionally! why, that is surely a weak word. Do you throw over all old friends so cavalierly, Miss Home?” he asked, with a meaning sneer in the tone of his voice.

“I never throw over a friend,” said Mary; “they are too few to be thrown away.” For her life she could not resist the impulse to add, “I cannot include Mr. Fitzloom in the list.”

Fitzloom hardly expected so straightforward a rebuff, and had some difficulty to

conceal his annoyance ; but there was a very malicious meaning in the tone with which he asked “when Miss Home had last heard from young Macdonald ?”

“Mr. Macdonald is not a correspondent of mine,” Mary answered simply, although she blushed as Mrs. Moore glanced at her inquiringly ; “I have heard neither of nor from him since I left Scotland.”

“You haven’t heard the news, then ?” said Fitzloom. “Why, the young Highland clown bolted a few days before you left, and has never been heard of at home since. Wouldn’t you like to know where he is ?” asked he tauntingly.

Mary was a brave girl, and honest as she was brave. Many a girl in her place would have done their best to feign indifference, but she with straightforward simplicity replied that she should be heartily glad to

hear anything that was true, for that Mr. Macdonald and she were very old friends.

“Oh! the story is very soon told,” said Fitzloom contemptuously; “the cub ran away from home, and enlisted in a cavalry regiment. He is in India now, Miss Home, and it is not long ago since I myself saw him tied up to the triangles to be flogged for a theft.”

“Hector Macdonald a thief!” cried Mary with sudden indignation; “I would not believe it if you were to swear it on your knees. It is an infamous falsehood!”

“No occasion for so much vehemence; I never said he was a thief; I only told you he was flogged for theft. Take your choice of alternatives—he is either a thief and a flogged man both, or he is no thief, but has been flogged like a faulty hound. A right noble boast for a Macdonald to be able to

show the weals of the cat on his shoulders!"

Mary shuddered and turned sick at the thought. She thought of the gallant lad as she had known him, and of how his spirit must have been broken by the foul indignity—if indeed, and here was her comfort—Fitzloom's story was not a malicious invention. Her heart was too full to speak more; she silently put her arm within Mrs. Moore's, and asked that lady to take her away. The sympathising Irishwoman, who had formed her own conclusions, complied at once. She placed Mary on an ottoman in the corner of the large saloon; and leaving her there, sought out her husband and told him to find out what he could about Fitzloom first, and then to make preparations for returning to Cawnpore as speedily as possible.

In another hour they were on their road

from Bithoor. As they drove to cantonments, the Captain told his wife, and another silent and sad listener as well, what he had learned about Fitzloom. He had a few months previously joined the 30th Light Dragoons in the Madras Presidency, and had immediately entered on a career of dissipation which had made him a marked man. At length there had been a clamant scandal—the Captain had not been able to learn precisely what it was about, but it appeared to have been something connected with the subornation of false evidence; and Fitzloom had received the option of standing a court-martial, or of at once throwing up his commission and leaving the station. He had chosen the latter alternative, and for some occult reason, which the Captain was not even able to guess at, he had found his way almost immediately to Bithoor, and was

living in the palace there, in terms of the closest intimacy with the Rajah and his secretary, Azimoolah. This was all he was able to learn, save that not a man in cantonments would recognise Fitzloom in the most distant way, and that the only companion he might be said to have outside the walls of Bithoor was the drunken cashiered officer in whose company Mrs. Moore and Mary had found him.

CHAPTER VIII.

OLD Mr. Home, although his special duty was in the capacity of a military chaplain, had, early after his arrival, put himself in close alliance with the missionaries stationed at Cawnpore by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. The good men, although compelled to refrain by a stringent general order from any efforts at proselytising among the native soldiers, were wont to labour in the native town, and in the various bazaars, with very little effect indeed as to their main purpose, but with the result of obtaining a more familiar footing among the native population than was enjoyed by

any other Europeans. Almost as soon as Mr. Home began to get sufficiently at home in the native language to enable him to understand, in a measure, the state of feeling among the native inhabitants, as evidenced by their occasional remarks, he became more and more profoundly impressed with the conviction that that state of feeling was unsatisfactory. Curious ambiguous sayings were rife, which might mean nothing, or might mean a great deal. A phrase which he heard very frequently dropped in the bazaars—"Sub lal bogar hi," the literal meaning of which is, "Everything shall become red," puzzled him extremely. He sought a solution of his friend, Captain Moore, when that officer cheerily assured him that it was but a prophesy of extended British supremacy—that it was an allusion to the early period when the British uni-

form would be seen in the ascendant all over India. Still the old man was not satisfied. He heard strange muttered whispers about cartridges greased with the lard of the accursed pig, and flour into which was ground the bones of the sacred bulls—devices meant to break down the punctilios of caste and open up the way for the universal introduction of Christianity. In March he learned some unconnected fragments of a story about a curious circulation, between town, and village, and hamlet, of a seemingly inoffensive present, two chupatees, or cakes of salt and flour, but which, inoffensive as it seemed, set fermenting the native population wherever it was received. Mr. Home frequently communicated his suspicions that things were in an unsatisfactory condition, not only to Sir Hugh Wheeler, but to subordinate officers and civilians as

well. Everywhere, however, he was treated as a mere alarmist. Some laughed at him outright ; others listened to him respectfully, indeed, but with an air of incredulity, and afterwards chatted among themselves about the “ craze of the good old Scottish chaplain.”

At length, however, in the month of April, Mr. Home succeeded in making one or two converts. He brought Moore and another sagacious officer into contact with several Sepoy naiks and havildars, who told them that a party of disbanded Brahmins of the Nineteenth Bengal Infantry had come from somewhere westward into the cantonments, and were telling wild incoherent stories of mutiny, and murders, and midnight fire-raising, and butchered Europeans, and countless mohurs of booty.

Still he did not succeed in convincing the

authorities, although, partly through his information and partly by reason of strange reports from other quarters, a feeling of uneasiness prevailed. Sir Hugh Wheeler, the general in command of the Cawnpore Station, was a very old man, who had seen much Indian service at the head of Sepoy regiments, and who could not be brought to believe that mutiny was a possibility. Apart from the conviction of his mind, there must have been in Sir Hugh no little feeling of the heart in the matter ; for he had proved his belief in the native population by allying himself in marriage to one in whose veins flowed Eastern blood. He spoke Hindustanee like a native ; he had led Sepoy troops to victory half a century and more before this eventful summer ; he had dwelt among natives the major part of his life ; and it was hardly wonderful that he should positively

refuse to believe in the possibility of treachery.

But he soon had to do it. Something, indeed, was known in the bungalows of the English, at mess-tables and in club-rooms, of atrocities committed at Delhi, Meerut, and Agra ; but men's blood ran cold when Mr. Home unfolded the budget which he had collected in the bazaars—of wholesale revolt among the native troops—of the butchery of every Englishman in Delhi. Sir Hugh, however, was confident in the fidelity of his own command, and actually announced an immediate advance to the rescue of Delhi. But he soon found hotter work at home. By the 20th May the native regiments at Cawnpore were working like yeast. The infatuated veteran turned in the hour of need to his “friend,” the Maharaja of Bithoor, who, with the utmost complaisance,

sent into Cawnpore three hundred men. He came himself, too, with Azimoolah and Fitzloom in his train, and made to the authorities the bland proposal that the European women and children should be placed in safety in his palace at Bithoor, till the gust had blown over.

Sir Hugh would have accepted the offer, but Colonel Ewart and others joined their emphatic dissuasions, and at length he was induced to take another course. He determined to erect, within the cantonments, a place of refuge in time of need. The magazine stood at the north-west corner of the cantonments, with its flank on the river, a ready-made fortress, with inexhaustible stores of gups and ammunition. But the whirlpool of impending ruin appeared to have already sucked Sir Hugh Wheeler within its vortex, and instead of selecting

this noble position of defence, he chose another situation, which could not have been worse adapted for its purpose, if his enemies themselves had selected it. On the bosom of the great flat plain comprised within the boundaries of the cantonments, on the south-east side of the Ganges Canal, and almost in the centre of the plain, there stood a couple of single-storied barracks, with spacious verandahs round them, each barrack intended for the accommodation of a single company. These two erections were known as the Dragoon hospital. Both erections were of thin brick-work—hardly bullet, much less shot, proof; and the roof of one—the larger building—was of thatch, while that of the other was of concrete. Behind these barracks were some cooking sheds and servants' huts, and in front of the larger was a well, with a parapet in front of it. Sir

Hugh most inexplicably selected these buildings as the centre of his operations, and enclosed them with a mud entrenchment of the shape of a rectangular parallelogram. This wretched mud wall was but four feet in height, three feet thick at the base, and but two at the top, presenting but little obstacle to the penetration of an Enfield bullet. No proper batteries were constructed, but mere gaps in this wall were left to serve the purpose of embrasures.

Sir Hugh gave orders for this miserable contrivance to be provisioned for twenty-five days. It seemed nobody's business to see to the performance of the service, and the consequence was that it was carried out after the manner of Indian contractors, peas and ^uflower forming the staple of the very insufficient supplies. What else there was, in the shape of liquor and preserved meats,

was chiefly sent in by the different regimental mess committees, who did not believe implicitly in Sir Hugh as a caterer.

While this work was in progress, the station was becoming more and more alive to the danger which impended over it. When the entrenchment was finished, the women and children were sent into it nightly, while their husbands, abandoning their own bungalows, pitched their tents within the native lines, and remained there during the night. Mr. Home, whose influence with the Sepoys appeared to be very great, handed over Mary to Mrs. Moore, and never left the lines at all, working night and day to allay the ferment. The Mohammedan feast of the Eed on the 24th of May passed over, contrary to expectation, without a rising. The Royal salute on the Queen's birthday was omitted, lest the noise of the firing might

be misconstrued. The Nana plotted with his wily subordinates, and maintained a smooth countenance to the English, while Azimoolah sounded the sentiments of the native soldiery; and Fitzloom loafed and drank with any European who would speak to him. He was a constant companion of the drunken cashiered civilian with whom Mary Home saw him in the palace of Bithoor; and one night, after the two had been drinking heavily, he persuaded the poor sot to fire on a cavalry patrol who challenged him. The shot was an unlucky one, although it did not take effect. Fitzloom sneaked off to the house of his patron, and escaped any consequences: his comrade was tried next morning by court-martial, and acquitted on the plea that his musket went off by mistake. The native troops began to mutter, what became in a day or

two a proverbial expression, that their own pieces might haply go off by mistake as well, and the feeling of hatred to everything white was deepened greatly by the circumstance. That it was a planned scheme between Azimoolah and Fitzloom to accelerate the inevitable rising, there can be no doubt ; and although its immediate aim miscarried, it was not barren of effect.

CHAPTER IX.

INFORMATION respecting the result of Hector's court-martial was of course officially conveyed to Sir Patrick Grant, the commander-in-chief of the Madras Presidency. Sir Patrick, who was a company's officer (the first company's officer, indeed, who had ever held the post), was a man who did not confine his inquiries into the condition of a regiment to the mere formal inquiry occasionally on a parade, whether there were "any complaints." He at once came up to Bangalore himself, and having first severely reprimanded the colonel of the 30th for his laxity in permitting Fitz-

loom thus to "desert," as he styled it, he sent for Hector, and cross-questioned him narrowly and closely into the origin of the hatred which had incited Fitzloom to do an act of treachery so diabolical. Hector at first tried to return general answers ; but the old general, whose curiosity and sense of justice were at once roused, insisted upon knowing the whole matter *ab initio*. Hector made a clean breast of it, save that he contrived to avoid introducing Mary Home's name ; but the old general saw that there was something still behind, and he pressed Hector very hard on the point, how he, a laird's eldest son, came to enlist as a private soldier.

There was something in the old soldier's genial pertinacity which was not to be gainsaid, and the blushing Hector told his whole story. Sir Patrick sat for some time play-

ing with his snow-white moustache, and muttering in his Scotch accent, “Ye silly fule,” “Ye stupid carle,” for he was prone to the vernacular when with a countryman. At length he stood up, and resuming his air of command—

“Well, young fellow,” said he, “it is clear enough after this affair you ought not to remain in the 30th. If you don’t rise, you will be apt to think the officers are keeping you down by reason of the slur which, through your innocent instrumentality, has been cast upon their order. If you do go up the tree, your comrades will be sure to say that you rise through the favour shown you on account of what was so near proving so cruel a misfortune for you. You must be transferred out of the 30th, that’s clear. Now, look you, young fellow, I well knew stout old Sir Dugald whom you have just

mentioned; I have been under his command many a warm day, and I knew your father's place when I was a lad—for I am a Strathspey man myself; and to tell you the truth, lad, although your mother was from the Isles, I believe she and I were far off cousins. Now, bluid's thicker than water, young Macdonald—always with a reservation. If you are a good soldier and a credit to the north, what I can do for you I will; if you turn out a graceless ne'er-do-weel, I'll 'approve and confirm' a flogging sentence on ye, if you were my own son. I'll think the matter over, and see what I can do for you; and in the meantime I'll take you as orderly in attendance on myself. Have you a chum? He is not a good soldier that's without a chum."

Hector replied that "a man named Sullivan had been his chum ever since he enlisted."

“Sullivan, Sullivan,” said the general; “hem!—an Irishman. Tell you what, my lad; he’s either an infernally bad fellow or a trump, for I never yet knew an Irishman who was not at one end or other of the rope.

Hector respectfully intimated that in his opinion Sullivan was at the right end of the rope.

“Well, well,” said Sir Patrick, “I don’t like parting chums in the army! it’s like parting man and wife in civil life. I’ll see that your chum comes to head-quarters with you—and now you may go.”

Next day orders were given to Hector and his chum, Sullivan, to prepare for going down to Madras, to be attached to head-quarter staff. Mr. Sullivan was in a state of high delight at this order.

“Arrah now, Heckthor,” he shouted rather

than said, "sure the spalpeens have at last recognized my merits. Ye think, ye crature, that it's by raison of you, that we've got this hoigth av promotion, maybe? Troth, and it's just yersilf that's mistaken intirely. Sure, wid the tail of my eye, I seen the ould bloke av a commander-in-chafe a-lookin' at me yesterday wi' glances av admiration, and then he turned round to the adjutant and, says he—be jabbers and ye may laugh, but I heard him wid my own two ears—'Who's that purty man at all, Mister Lee?' and says ould Johnny, 'Sur, yer warship's riverence, that's Michael Sullivan, at yer sarvice, me lord, an' a very good man he is, and a credit to his bringing up, which was county Tipperary, plase yer warship, and he's one av the foinest men in the corps, yer holiness, and would have been a sergeant-major years ago, only for a nasty dryness in

his troat, that he takes from his mother, sur, which spoils his word av command intirely.' So I seen the ould chafe pull out his note-book, an'—och, sure it's gaspel I'm tellin' ye, Billy Williams, and ye needn't grin there as if that beautiful spudtrap av yours was made like the mouth of thim expandin' pork-mankles—an' ye see, it's this ordher that's the upshot, acushla." Nor was Mick to be driven from the position that he had caught the general's eye, and that it was to his appearance as a smart soldier that the transfer to Madras was to be attributed.

The two comrades got down there in the beginning of April, and found head-quarters a very easy billet. There was a little despatch carrying, and now and then a turn out for escort duty, and that was about all. But Hector was longing ardently for some real soldiering, for hitherto he had been only

playing at soldiering. He heard the staff officers talking among themselves of disturbances which were taking place in Bengal, of partial mutinies among the Sepoy infantry of that Presidency, and of the 84th Queen's having been sent for from Rangoon. These reports were, however, kept as quiet as possible, since it was not judged advisable that a knowledge of them should be allowed to go forth, and extend among the native troops in Madras; and indeed it was only in virtue of his position at head-quarters, as reckoned a trustworthy and reliable man, that Hector heard of them at all. But the secret was not to be kept long. A telegraphic message flashed into Madras, recounting the details of the rising and massacre at Meerut. On the 16th of May there came an order for the 1st Madras Fusiliers to embark at once, ready for action, and steam up

to Calcutta. The "Lambs," as they were called, Hector already knew a good deal about. They had come back to Madras from the Persian Gulf just at the time he was brought down from the interior, and, anxious to pick up as much information as he could about real warfare, he had become very friendly with not a few of the Fusiliers. They were rather a mixed lot, as every Indian European regiment was—fellows of unexceptionable physique the majority of them, and fit for any service—those of them who had become seasoned to the climate. But when the regiment came back from Persia it found an accumulation consisting of several draughts of recruits; and although the veterans were as tough as leather, the efficiency of the regiment was somewhat weakened (as was afterwards proved) by the number of green soldiers who were in its

ranks at the time the order for Bengal reached Madras.

Hector got the "route" from head-quarters at eleven o'clock at night, with orders to take it to Colonel Neill at once. Neill was the colonel of the Fusiliers. He was a splendid fellow. He had been among the Bashi-Bazouks in the Crimea, and if he had got his own strong-handed way, he would have made soldiers of the ruffians, or their backs would have known the reason why. Neill was an Ayrshireman, with a leaven of the old Cameronian iron in his composition; and as he read the order, with the light of the shaded lamp falling upon his strongly-lined face and iron-gray moustache, Hector thought to himself, if his actions corresponded to his looks, he was the leader whom he would be proud to follow through fire and water. A couple of minutes Neill sat in deep thought

with the order in his hand, and a forefinger resting upon his knitted brow. Then he dashed his hand heavily on the table, sprang to his feet as if he had been galvanised, and threw his cap on his head. Turning abruptly to Hector, he asked,

“Are you a sensible fellow?”

Hector instinctively divined that a short answer would best please this abrupt interrogator.

“Try me,” was his reply.

“Good, my lad,” Neill jerked out. “Take this order and go to Major Stephenson and Major Renaud, and then to the quartermaster, and tell them from me we embark to-morrow forenoon. Let the captains, the sergeant-major, and the colour-sergeants know. Work as if you were working for your own hand, and you’ll please me. Now be off!”

This was a man after Hector's own heart. The sense of responsibility with which the sagacious soldier had invested the lad made him very proud, and he set to work with a will to justify the confidence. At six o'clock in the morning he returned to the colonel, whom he found, with set teeth and corrugated brow, writing furiously. Hector waited till he had finished, and then told him that he had executed his order, and that the regiment was on the alert.

"Very good, my lad," said Neill, looking very kindly at him from under his shaggy eyebrows. "You are a sensible fellow. What's your corps?"

Hector thought he saw here the opening he wanted. He told Neill of the position he was in, and how he had been taken away from the 30th. With an unstudied candour, for which he could not account to himself,

he told the grim colonel how he panted to see real soldiering, and prayed of him that he would take him up to Bengal with the Madras men. There was something in this that struck a responsive keynote in the impulsive bosom of the hot-blooded though outwardly cool Ayrshireman. He, too, had longed with the longing of years for an opening to distinguish himself, and his heart was glad with the conviction that that opportunity had now come.

"I'll do what I can for you, my lad," he broke out abruptly after a minute's thought. "I like the stuff you're made of. If I can you shall go with me."

And Hector left him in a state of happy expectancy. Neill was as good as his word. In the forenoon he visited Sir Patrick Grant, and as he passed out, Hector was in waiting.

“All right, my lad,” said Neill, cheerily, “you are going with me as an extra orderly-room clerk, and the General talks of some Irishman who belongs to you—I am to take him too. He is attached to the ‘Lambs,’ and we’ll make him useful, as he is a dragoon, for orderly duty.”

And so Neill strode away.

In the afternoon Hector and Mick got their own orders from the adjutant-general’s department, and at night they were on board the steamer. Early next morning (the 18th) they sailed. Neill appeared to have taken a great liking to young Macdonald. He had not manifested it, however, by letting him take things easy. On the contrary, Neill, not believing in taking things easy himself, disliked want of energy in anybody else. He did not spare himself, and when there was occasion for work

he spared nobody else. He kept Hector writing to dictation like a steam-engine. The young fellow's fingers ached, and his head felt bad, as he sat in the close cabin from morning to night ; but every now and then Neill threw in a word or two of praise and encouragement, and he nerved himself again cheerily to please the man he was rapidly deifying. The voyage was destitute of incident, save that one of the boilers burst. It did no harm ; but the reduction to half speed, which the accident necessitated, chafed the colonel greatly. However, after all, the voyage was not a very long one. They got up to Calcutta on the afternoon of the 23rd. The moment the anchor was down, Neill set about disembarking his "Lambs." Disembark, however, is hardly the word, since they were merely transferred in batches of a hundred into large

flats, where, as Neill with grim humour remarked, "You'll be quite cool and comfortable, and out of the way of mischief."

This done, Neill made off himself, taking Hector with him, to astonish red-tape with his restless energy. He never knew fatigue or rest till he had seen and bullied military secretaries, quartermaster-generals, and all the sleepy regulation-ridden official horde. Hector was kept at it pretty stiffly, too, for Neill was an extraordinary fellow for dashing off little pellets of notes, on very unofficial paper and in very unofficial style, and peppering one circumlocution office remorselessly with them, while he sat upon another in person. While on one of these missions, Hector had occasion to pass along one of the leading streets of Calcutta. Although getting over the ground as fast as heat and fatigue would permit, he yet was

using his eyes to as good purpose as possible, and as he passed a photographer's gallery, at the entrance to which a number of portraits were displayed, as at home, in a glass case, he saw something which made him flush all over and stop as if he had been shot. He looked at the glass case closely, and could not believe the evidence of his own eyes. But the longer he looked, the clearer was the bewildering sight. Still in dubitation, he carefully wiped his eyes, then stepped close up to the case, and took another long scrutiny. No, there could be no mistake about it. An admirably-executed full-length portrait of Mary Home was looking at him out of a very handsome frame. It was Mary herself, and no other. In the portrait she was rather thinner than when Hector had seen her last, and there was less colour as well as less fulness in the

beautiful cheek, but the beloved face was too deeply graven on Hector's memory for him to be in a moment's doubt as to the portrait being a portrait of Mary Home. After a long, long wistful gaze, while as he looked all the happy past flashed rapidly before his mind's eye, he strode rapidly into the photographer's apartment, and asked him how he came to be possessed of the portrait.

The photographer was a Scot, and a decent fellow. Of course, at first, he advanced the position that he did not choose to betray the confidence of those who had been his "clients;" but he saw the agitation of Hector, and pretty well guessed what was the state of the case. So he consented to give him all the information in his power.

"Hem, hem! Mrs. Colonel Bangle—to put a good deal colour on check—no, that's

not it. Miss Fruncher, paint out mole on left cheek—no, that's not the one. Mrs. Collector Grubbins—no, it can't be her, she had a false front and squinted. Lieutenant Brascott's lady—yes, I think that must be the lady. (Hector felt as if he had been suddenly subjected to a shower-bath.) Let's see—no, I remember she was taken sitting because she was getting—oh, never mind, you don't want to know whether Mrs. Brascott was stout or lean. Here it is at last. Miss Mary Home, the —— Hotel, to be sent home to-morrow without fail. I remember all about the young lady now, my lad, and a very nice young lady she was, a Scotswoman, and brought her papa with her, too, a Scotsman as well. And you're a Scot, too, I'm thinking? Here's the papa's likeness—a very excellent one, I think you will admit. Now, let me see—

yes, it was in December last they came here, recommended by Mr. —, of — Hotel, a Scotsman, too, my friend. They wanted the photos in a hurry, to catch the mail, and because they were going to start for an up-country station next day, themselves. What station, you want to know? I don't think I can tell you, really. I believe I did hear the old gentleman mention it. It was, I think, Meerut, or else Cawnpore; or if it wasn't Cawnpore, it must have been Lucknow. But now I think of it, I'm not sure it wasn't Peshawur."

Hector very nearly swore at the prosy photographer, but that imperturbable gentleman did not appear to see his irritation. He continued to ramble on inconsequently, and appeared somewhat hurt when Hector broke in rather roughly upon his maundering, with a demand to know what he would take

for the photograph. "Not for sale at any price," was the tart reply—made tarter because the well-meaning photographer was nettled. Hector begged and prayed, but the old fellow, who had a very high opinion of the importance of his craft, asserted that were he to comply with Hector's wishes it would be as bad as a lawyer disposing of his client's securities. Hector tried to argue him out of this position, but he was as stubborn as a mule. Then he attempted entreaty, but the photographer was equally insensible to this argument. In despair, Hector turned to leave, with a muttered remark bearing a reference to a "crusty old curmudgeon." He had reached the door, when the photographer, with a dry smile on his withered face, called him back. "Ye're a silly callant," said he, his original tongue breaking out as his heart warmed; "I see

fine what's the maitter wi' you, an' I was ance clean daft after a lassie mysel'—bide a wee." He disappeared into some dark closet or other, and presently emerged with an armful of dingy negatives. "Maybe," said he, "we'll find something here that I can let ye have with a clear conscience." The search was long and dusty, and seemed likely to be unsuccessful, but among the very last, the old man turned up a blotched duplicate of Mary's portrait. "Hae, laddie," said he, "if that be ony satisfaction to ye, tak' it awa' and welcome. No, I'll charge ye naething for it. But when ye're a field-marshal, ye can pay me for the time I've lost searching through the waistrie to please a daft antic o' a love-sick young fule." Hector thanked him with genuine feeling, and was a second time at the door, when the old photographer recalled him, to tell him that if he chose to inquire about Mr. Home's

destination at some complicated public office or other, he would probably, if he found the officials in a communicative humour, learn what he was unable to tell him.

Of course, Hector ought to have run all the way to this office; but it must be remembered that he was a soldier on duty—on very important and urgent duty also. He did not go at once, and he never had an opportunity of doing so afterwards. When Neill meant business, he did not allow himself or his subordinates much leisure-time; and most emphatically on this occasion Neill did mean business. His resistless push and energy swept every obstacle out of his path. The very day after his arrival in the Hooghly, he managed to start a detachment of his “Lambs” up the river by steamer. The rest he determined should follow without loss of time, and he carried out his determination.

CHAPTER X.

AS mentioned at the end of our last chapter, Neill started off a detachment of his "Lambs" up the river the day after their arrival. The remainder went up by train in drafts of a hundred at a time. They started by the train which left Calcutta at 8.30 P.M. Every night Neill was over at the terminus at Howrah, awakening up everybody with his infectious energy. The railway people did not like his peremptory ways, and made a point of doing all they could, in a negative sort of way, to balk him. About this Neill did not care a single rap, so long as he could prevent

them from being successful; and, as he grimly remarked to Hector, if it came to a fair trial of strength, he would perhaps astonish the weak nerves of the railway gentlemen.

The time came when he did astonish them to some tune. It was the night of the departure of the second draft. The flat upon which the soldiers were was being hauled into the jetty, when a sudden squall arose, and the disembarkation was delayed a considerable time. Hector and Sullivan were on the jetty, which abuts into the river at the station, and Neill was in the flat, which was being hauled in shore by Government labourers. The station-master was fussing about very pompously, and his equanimity had been considerably disturbed by an altercation between him and Hector, on the subject of the railway hands giving some as-

sistance, which the Jack-in-office had peremptorily refused. As the flat approached the jetty, the station-master impertinently shouted,

“Colonel Neill, you’re all behind, and I can tell you the train won’t wait for you a single minute ; whenever the time is up we start, if the Governor-General himself wanted us to wait.”

Neill’s face blazed scarlet in a second, as his hot Scottish blood boiled at the insult ; in a moment more he had drawn a long breath, and was to outward appearance the coolest of the cool.

“Corporal Macdonald,” he called in a quiet, deliberate tone—“Corporal Macdonald, take Sullivan with you and form a guard over the engine of that train. I hold you responsible if it starts till you have orders from me. If you find it impossible

to effect your purpose in any other way, you may find it necessary to shoot the driver and stoker."

Charged with this responsibility, Hector and Mick started for the head of the train, Sullivan giving the station-master a sly shove as he passed him. Having reached the engine, they stepped "on board," explained their instructions to the fireman and the engine-driver, and at the same time exhibited their credentials in the shape of a couple of six-chambered revolvers. The grimy subordinates laughed heartily at Neill's high-handed course of action, and professed huge delight at it, for the station-master, it appeared, was a very unpopular personage. He came up to the engine very soon after Hector and Mick had taken possession of it, and peremptorily ordered them to "come out of that," at the same time calling on

some of his myrmidons to remove them by force. Mr. Sullivan had a few remarks to make on this point.

“Bedad now, luk here, Mr. Puttynose,” was honest Mick’s reply, “it’s mesilf manes to stop here till Kurnel Naill tells me to come out. But there’s only two of us, and there’s the divil’s own lot intoirely of ye; and so, me jewel, the moment one of your spalpeens o’ blazes lays hand or fut on me or the corporal here, be the holy Methusaleh, I’ll shoot yourself, old bumptious. So if ye haven’t confessed all thim sins of yours, an’ made all square wid the Blessed Vargin, be jabers, ye’ll better not meddle wid us. Heckthor, me boy, kape your weadder eye on that baste of a driver, he luks mischievous, and I’ll luk after this station-masther’s own particlar wilfare.”

Mick looked quite prepared to carry his

threat into execution, so the station-master gave him up, and walked back along the platform to have another shy at Neill. The colonel was busy packing his men into the carriages, and did not heed him much at first, but as his insolence became louder, he at length condescended to hear what the station-master had to say. One sentence was enough for Neill. In a minute more, how he hardly knew, the Jack-in-office was in a corner of the waiting-room, with a sergeant's guard over him. This summary act brought a posse of clerks down upon Neill, who at length threatened, if the fellows did not go about their business, he would clear the platform by a bayonet charge. There was not much delay, after all. Ten minutes after time all the Fusiliers were comfortably settled in the carriages, and then Neill in person re-

lieved Hector and Mick, and started the train himself. When it was fairly off, he stalked into the centre of the knot of jabbering clerks, and, as he afterwards said himself, "opened out" on them. "You are," he told them angrily, "a pack of traitors and rebels, and it's a very lucky thing for you that it is not my province to have to deal with you. I would hang the station-master to encourage you other fellows, and give the whole lot of you a lively reminder of a cat-o'-nine-tails." Then he left them to their reflections and stalked away.

When next night came, and another detachment had to be despatched, Hector laughed heartily to find how painfully polite and civil were the once bumptious railway people. Neill had fairly knocked the conceit out of them.

When he had got off all his "Lambs," he himself, accompanied by Hector, set out for Benares, pressing on with eager speed. Sullivan had started previously with one of the drafts. It was the forenoon of the 3rd of June when Neill came into Benares, and he came in the very nick of time. Benares was the very stronghold of Brahminism, and it was rotten to the core. Brigadier Ponsonby was in command, a splendid officer, but in failing health, and an advocate of the temporising policy which cost so many British lives in Bengal. Neill struck in at once with an demand for the immediate disarmament of the disaffected native soldiery ; but he was not at once successful, although strongly backed by a man of the same stamp as himself, Colonel Gordon of the Loodianah Sikhs. One of those councils, which were Neill's utter aversion, con-

sisting of civilians as well as officers, was called on the forenoon of the 4th of June, and had a long and bootless palaver about the policy of disarmament. When the windy, useless talk was going on, a sowar rode into cantonments with the intelligence that the 17th Native Infantry had mutinied at Azimghur, distant only sixty miles ; and this circumstance at length influenced the council to a tardy decision. But even then there was procrastination. The disarming parade was to take place, not immediately, but next morning. And so the palaver broke up, and the civilians went off home to prepare for the morrow.

But intelligence reached the chiefs which determined them on taking time by the forelock, and disarming the native troops the same afternoon. Half an hour was the time allowed for turning out, and punctual

to time (five o'clock) the little European army, numbering about two hundred and thirty men, were drawn up on the parade-ground of the 37th. Ponsonby, as the senior officer, of course held the command, but as the little line was being dressed he was struck down by a sunstroke, and carried off the ground insensible. Then the command devolved upon Neill, and he took it up right readily. The Sikhs and the cavalry had not kept tryst, but he would not wait for them. He made an impetuous dash at the Sepoy huts, where all appeared extraordinarily quiet. Neill was out to the front (as usual), and not caring very much how strongly he was supported, when a volley burst from the huts, and a helter-skelter rush of Pandies at the back of it.

The yelling demons came on like madmen, and for a moment Neill seemed lost.

But Hector and Sullivan and half-a-dozen of his "Lambs" came crashing through the mob and carried their chief off to one side ; and then Olpherts opened fire with his three guns, and at the point-blank range the grape tore through the Sepoys with withering effect. They could not hold their faces against this pitiless storm, and although for a time they doggedly maintained a drooping fire of musketry, the majority of them began to bolt out of the lines and sneak off for the open country. It was Neill's aim to see them clear off the cantonments, to prevent them doing any damage to unprotected people there ; and with this purpose he again led his Fusiliers in among the huts, and set about clearing out of them the last remaining Pandy. While he was out of sight at this work, a fresh complication arose. Gordon had brought up the

Sikhs and the irregular cavalry, and formed them up on the left, with the cavalry on the outside. There was a bad feeling between the cavalry and the Sikhs, and when the guns opened fire upon the 37th, the two corps began to quarrel, and the Sikhs fell into a panic of mutiny. Somebody fired at Col. Gordon, then a volley was sent into the thick of a group of officers. Olpherts whipped round the muzzles of his guns and gave the Sikhs a dose of the grape with which he had just been physicking the 37th, while the small covering detachment of the Fusiliers left with the guns opened fire with their Enfields. Three times did the infuriated Sikhs charge up to the muzzles of the guns, and three times did a belch of grape drive them back. It was hot work, but it did not last long. Before Neill could come storming back, out of the

huts, the Sikh regiment had been beaten, was scattered, and in full flight. Olpherts changed the dose from grape to round-shot, and blazed into them as they fled. Three hundred dead and wounded Sikhs and Sepoys were left upon and about the parade-ground—not a European was touched. The Sikhs suffered more than the 37th, and without deserving it half as richly. They were not mutineers of forethought, and had they understood the position of affairs, there is little doubt that they would have remained staunch.

Neill's work had only begun. Hector had not been for three weeks almost constantly in the company of his chief without beginning to understand his character. He had seen the water gather in the deep-set grey eye, he had watched the brow furrow, the muscles of the mouth work and

quiver, and the lean, brown hand clench like a vice, as Neill read or talked sparingly of the horrible atrocities of the Sepoy butcher-rebels. He had heard him in the dead of night walking up and down in his room, and praying—for Neill was a man of prayer—that he might be the instrument in God's hands of inflicting a fearful punishment on the bloody miscreants. He had noticed the marks inserted in Neill's pocket Bible at passages in the Old Testament recounting the righteous and ruthless slaughter of whole nations of grievous offenders; and he had come to recognize the existence in Neill of a settled faith that mercy to Sepoys was criminal. He had seen with what ferocity Neill had striven to slay and spare not when driving the 37th from the huts, and the fierce joy with which he stuck to the bloody work till cannon shot or Enfield

bullet could not find another victim. And, indeed, there were few in that band, or indeed in India at that time, who did not feel very blood-thirsty. Men's hearts are not stones, not to be thrilled by stories of old men and young butchered in cold blood, of British ladies outraged and slaughtered, of tender infants torn from their mother's arms and brained—kids seethed in their mother's milk. The rough common soldiers, as some orderly from the staff or some bazaar gossip told them the fearful stories, wept like little children over the recital, and as they dried their eyes again and coughed down the unwonted emotion, their faces set hard and stern with an expression that bore no hope of quarter to any creature of the hated race. There has been nothing like the Indian Mutiny in the annals of modern warfare. It was not war, it was extermination.

Young Macdonald had a fearful foreboding to embitter the hot wrath he shared with his fellows. Mary Home and her father, he knew, were somewhere in the interior of the Presidency. He durst not let himself think on the chances of their fate. Mary in the hands of those demons—the thought was madness, yet it clung to him ; and action, constant action, was the only antidote against a brooding which he feared, if indulged in, would result in utter insanity.

The moment the firing was over, Neill had a gallows rigged on the parade ground. There were not many prisoners, for the soldiers were not in the temper to take men alive. But there were some. Among Neill's "Lambs" there were plenty of volunteers for the office of hangman, and big Jim Ellicot, a Devonshire man, got the job. Neill made it no sinecure. It was very late

that night before Jim Ellicot was able to pull down his shirt sleeves. Mick Sullivan contributed the largest quota to the gallows of any one man. He was missing for some time, and Hector began to fear something had happened to him. A search was instituted through the huts, and in one of the most remote Mick was found. He was not hurt, and he was not alone. He was grimly standing over three Sepoys, and the corpse of a fourth was blocking the door. "I came plump in among these nagurs, and did for one as he tried to bolt; the tother three threw down their muskets, and bedad they've been prayin' for marcy ever since. Divil a mercy would I have shown a mother's son of them, but troth, ye see, I could only have killed one at a time, and whin I would be killing him, the tother two would have up wid their shooting sticks, and played Donny-

brook wid Mick. So here I shtuck, doin' sintry-go over the divils; howsoever, the best thing we can do now will be to do for them aisy and comfortable." Mick's suggestion was not complied with to the letter. The three rascals were marched up to the colonel under the escort of the proud captor, who was complimented highly by his chief. Then the captives of Mick's bow and spear fell into the hands of Jim Ellicot, who by this time was getting into pretty fair practice.

There was no more fighting, but plenty more hanging, during the next few days in Benares. Any one suspected of being a malcontent had awarded to him a short shrift and a long rope. On the evening of the 6th, Neill had got into his head that things were queer at Allahabad, some eighty miles further up country, where the Jumna

joins the Ganges. He knew its critical position, and its importance as a key for a further advance. The fort at Allahabad was at once an arsenal and a gold mine. But when Neill was at Benares it had a very scanty garrison of Europeans. Strictly speaking, indeed, there was not a European *soldier* in the place ; there were only a few men doing staff duty, and sixty invalided artillery men who had come in from Chunar. The native garrison consisted of Brazier's Sikhs, and a company of the 6th Native Infantry, the remainder of which were in cantonments outside the fort. Neill got very uneasy about this condition of affairs at a place so important, and on the evening of the 5th of June he started off young Arnold with fifty of the "Lambs." He was too late, and yet he was in time—too late to prevent the massacre, but in time to save the

fort. The night before had been a hellish one in Allahabad. There had been an afternoon parade of the 6th to hear read a letter of praise from the Governor-General. Three ringing cheers followed the reading of the order, and the officers were glad to believe that their men were staunch. They hardly had time given them to alter their opinion. There was a great muster at the mess-house, among the diners being a number of newly-arrived cadets—mere boys. Jollity was at its height, when the mutineers fell upon the jovial company, and butchered fourteen out of the number.

When Arnold arrived next morning he found the gates of the great gaols thrown open, and three thousand of the worst villains in the Valley of the Ganges let loose to the work of devilment. He found the bridge of boats wrecked, and everywhere

outside the fort scenes of slaughter and destruction. A little steamer from the fort brought his weary party over into it, and sure enough if ever men were wanted they were wanted there. Brazier's Sikhs were in a ferment, and only withheld, not from mutiny, but from wild licence, by the influence of young Brazier himself. This influence took a form which may fairly be styled original. Brazier stood over the magazine with a red-hot poker in his hand, and kept the peace with the threat that, if a breach of it took place among his command, he would, without more ado, stick the weapon among the powder; the result of which operation even half-mad Sikhs were sufficiently logical to infer.

CHAPTER XI.

IT was the night of the fourth of June. Mrs. Moore and Mary Home were sleeping in a corner of one of the wards of the Dragoon Hospital within the intrenchment—sleeping soundly after a day of harassing anxiety. Mary was the lighter sleeper of the two. Awakened by a sudden noise, she looked about her, and lo! the night was as day with the glare of a great conflagration. Quietly she awoke her companion. The stout-hearted soldier's wife looked up with the simple remark, "It has come, then?—certainly it is better than suspense;" and the pair, speedily joined by

many another anxious lady, stepped out under the verandah to see and to hear. All that terrible night they saw fire upon fire; they heard yell and shout, and sound of bugles, and the quick snap of pistol shots. Now and then one came to them out of the confusion, and bade them be of good cheer, for that the mutiny was as yet confined to the native cavalry regiments and to the First Native Infantry. At last the sun rose, and the broad plateau lay before them. Away to the westward the lines of the Second Cavalry were deserted—men and horses were alike gone. Presently Mrs. Williams descried her husband, the colonel of the 56th, marching his regiment, in good order and apparently in perfect control, across the plain to the deserted lines of the cavalry. Then the major of the 53rd hurriedly came into the intrenchment, and

all his native officers followed him. Sir Hugh Wheeler was there too, watching the course of events. Presently there came a shout from the quarter-guard of the 53rd, and the reports of muskets were heard. In a moment the regiment had gone mad. The men rushed on to the parade-ground—whether meaning well or meaning ill it is bootless now to inquire—and Sir Hugh, whose faith in the Sepoy was utterly routed, ordered the guns of the intrenchment to fire into the thick of them. At the third round the whole regiment fled along the road in wild confusion. The 59th followed, and it again was followed by the 56th.

The troops had mutinied, and there was nothing left to the Europeans but to put themselves in a state of defence and to await the issue ; for all around the country was up in arms, and to attempt escape was

to court death. About eighty native soldiers were found lurking about in the ravine and in the lines, and all day on the 5th they were hard at work, conveying within the intrenchment the arms and ammunition which had been left about the deserted lines in profusion. But many a wise and experienced officer believed that the precautions, although useful, would never be tested. They imagined, and not unnaturally, that the mutineers had all made for Delhi, where the rebel head-quarters were, and that all that was requisite was simply a period of watchfulness against surprise, till some more active measures should be deliberately decided on.

They soon found out how far wrong was this calculation. In the early morning of the 6th Sir Hugh received a letter—a letter from the Nana, his umquhile hospitable enter-

tainer at Bithoor, announcing his intention of attacking at once. The notice was short. All the officers crowded without delay into the entrenchments, and arrangements were made for the defence. Behind the mud-wall a company of a thousand souls or thereabouts was congregated. Of these four hundred and sixty-five were men of every age and profession. The women numbered about two hundred and eighty, and there were as many children. While the officers and men took up their position all around the low wall of the entrenchment, the women and children awaited within the frail shelter of the hospital what was to befall them.

When all the arrangements had been made, David Home collected what congregation chose to gather round him, and, kneeling down in the midst, solemnly com-

mitted the little band into the hand of the God of their fathers. The roar of artillery and the rattle of musketry crashed in upon his concluding sentences. All rushed outside, and lo ! the horizon was lurid with the fire and smoke of the advancing devastation. An hour after the balls were crashing through the fragile walls of the barracks, where sat in trepidation the women and children.

CHAPTER XII.

THE news of the frightful catastrophe at Allahabad reached Neill at Benares next day. He did not want the tidings to stimulate his energy ; but they did not make it comfortable times for the mutineers who fell into his power there. Next day he started off another detachment, and the day after, having thoroughly cowed Benares, and taught it a lesson, the report of which, circulated through the villages in the neighbourhood, paled the swarthy faces of the mutineers, he handed over the command of that city to Colonel Gordon, and with forty of his "Lambs," started

for Allahabad. It was a horrible march. They had to tramp it nearly all the way, for the whole country was up, and the insurgents had carried off all the dawk horses. Neill's energy had all but worn him out. Hector had to keep him up with frequent draughts of champagne and water, for he could eat nothing. But when at intervals there seemed a chance of a fight with prowling parties of insurgents who menaced the little band, he recovered his energy, and became himself again. The journey, which ought to have been accomplished in a night, occupied two days, and days of frightful heat and fearful exhaustion they were, Four or five men dropped by the way, killed by sunstroke as if by bullets; but doggedly the little band struggled on. Even Sullivan's cheery spirit was occasionally beat out of him during those two terrible days. His quaint talk and

merry jests had made him a special favourite among the Fusiliers, and Neill himself had taken a curious fancy to the happy-hearted Patlander ; but the fun, as he said himself, was fairly scorched out of him. At length, on the forenoon of the 11th, under a burning sun, the little band emerged on to the river at the end of the Benares Road. The bridge of boats should have been here, but a great part of it was gone, and what was left, on the Deeragunge side, was in the hands of the insurgents. Wearily the little band turned off to the left, through the village of Thoosie, Neill scheming out some plan to get into the evidently-beleaguered fort. At length a couple of natives were found just embarking in a skiff. They were seized and brought before Neill. He offered them a handful of silver to find him a boat big enough to transport across his men.

The chattering rascals rolled their eyes covetously on the money, and then said they would have to cross to the other side to get the only boat they knew of. Very eagerly they urged Neill to give them the money then and there, and they would be sure to return. His first impulse was to hang them as traitors; but Hector ventured to speak out. He suggested that the colonel should give them half the money down, and half when they brought the boat back; and that he himself should cross with them in the skiff, and shoot them if they did not fulfil their contract. The suggestion was a venturesome one, but acute; and Neill, who liked pluck above all things, gave the lad a smile of approval, as he told him to be off, and be quick about it. The fellows, between greed and fear of Hector's revolver, performed their bargain, and soon Hector had

the pleasure of another compliment from Neill, and of seeing half the Fusiliers safely on the water. The garrison in the fort had in the meantime seen the party, and two more boats were sent across lower down. Neill and Hector crossed in the last of these, Hector holding an umbrella over his exhausted officer. While they were on the water, two of the Fusiliers died of sunstroke in the boat; and indeed it was a wonder that one escaped the dreadful heat. They landed about a mile below the water-gate of the fort, and had to walk up to it through the yielding river-sand, so hot that they could not touch it with their hands. This tramp very nearly finished Neill. The fellows got him into the fort only by splashing water over him. At length the gate was reached, and Neill's joyous salute from the guard was, "Thank God, sir, you'll save us yet!"

It looked very problematical. There was only a handful of Europeans, and all around the fort the demons were swarming. Inside matters were not very pleasant. Brazier's Sikhs were in the fort, and it has already been said that Neill put no trust in the natives of any description. Mr. Sullivan, however, took a great fancy to the Loodianah men, as, indeed, did most of the "Lambs." They were all quartered together in the same range of barracks, and, tired as the Fusiliers were, Mick got up a free-and-easy among the "black devils" the very night he arrived in the fort. The reason for this mysterious fraternisation was not far to seek. The Sikhs had been using their opportunities to plunder the godowns of the merchants and the river steamer companies, and had accumulated a very extensive assortment of wines and spirits. These

they were free enough in parting with to the Fusiliers—for a consideration; and the consequence was that three parts of the garrison were often drunk at once. Neill was a man who gave the soldier as much liberty as most officers would; but he would have them fit for duty when he wanted them. Several times he was disappointed in this respect. He flogged a man, and issued an order to the effect that he would flog the whole detachment, *seriatim*, if he found that drunkenness still continued. But the certainty of death, not to speak of the fear of a flogging, will not keep a soldier in India (or, indeed, anywhere else) away from drink. So Neill had to take other steps. First he over-bade the soldiers with the Sikhs, and bought up all the drink in their possession. Then he bundled them out of the fort into an

old hospital near the Jumna. Finally he sent out Hector and a steady old colour-sergeant, and collected all the drink that was conveniently portable in the deserted godowns. What was too heavy to carry was ruthlessly stove in. And so Neill cured drunkenness in Allahabad Fort.

He had tougher work on his hand outside of it. The morning after he arrived he commenced proceedings by cannonading the village of Deeragunge, which commanded the all-important bridge. In the forenoon he sent down a party of Fusiliers and Sikhs, and thrashed the rascals out of the village, set it on fire, and then retook the bridge, which the natives had just finished repairing. Next day it was crossed by a reinforcement of one hundred Fusiliers, under Major Stephenson. For about ten days after this the chief occupation was fighting, alternated with

burning villages and hanging Sepoys. On the 15th there was quite a lively brush, in the shape of an attack on some villages between the fort and the city. The Sikhs proved themselves gallant fellows, and, from their superior swiftness of foot, fairly beat the Fusiliers in a charge. There was some stiff fighting just outside Kydgunge, where two men of the Fusiliers were killed and half-a-dozen wounded. Hector and Mick both distinguished themselves here, but in rather different ways. Hector, after a brisk single combat, managed to kill the chief lieutenant of the Moulavie, while he was engaged unsuccessfully in trying to rally a confused rabble of his men. The fellow died very hard, hacking at Hector with his splendid scimitar, after he had been brought to the ground with at least half-a-dozen bayonet stabs. At length, however, a thrust in the

throat quieted him, and Hector had the satisfaction of looting his jewelled scabbard, and the great diamond which flashed in the front of his turban. Mick's exploit was not such a brilliant one. He was on the left of the Fusiliers, who at one period of the skirmish a little overlapped the Sikh detachment. Mick was one of the sort rather given to noise when fighting, as most Irishmen are. He thought it incumbent to shout most vehemently all the time of an advance, alternating the proceedings, if the advance was in open order, by the occasional exhilarating performance of a jig. He had a very low idea of the capacity for fighting of the "nagurs," which was his generic appellation for everybody that was not white; and when he found himself actually, as it were, leading a lot of the Sikh "nagurs," he considered himself bound to

lead them on to glory with a bit of an extra spurt. So away he went to the front, bel-
lowing like a select confraternity of bulls,
the "nagurs" following him in bewilder-
ment. Mick, in his wild career, came to a
hedge, which, with an extra roar, he cleared
in gallant style, but alighted on the other
side in a swampy paddy field, and with the
force he came down he fairly "laired" in
the quagmire. The Sikhs passed him with
a grin, and left him sticking there, and it
was just on the cards that the future way-
farer might have chanced upon a skeleton
sticking up in the paddy field, a sad memo-
rial of Mr. Sullivan's rashness in not looking
before he leaped. Mick, however, was fer-
tile in resources, and loading and firing as
fast as possible, he got up a nice little ima-
ginary skirmish in the rear of the advance,
which, out of care for the maintenance of

their communications, brought a detachment back at the double. Mick came very near having to stand a promiscuous volley ; but his purpose was answered. He was dragged out, leaving his boots in the slough, and as he limped back to the fort barefoot, he took a solemn resolution that he would no more try to be heroic till he knew what was on the other side of the hedge.

There was another demonstration on still a larger scale on the 18th, when Neill, who had recovered, was in command himself. The enemy had cleared out of the villages, and all the satisfaction the troops had for their trouble was a long march, and the burning of about a dozen villages. But they would rather, by a long way, have stood up against the sturdiest foe in human form than have encountered the dread enemy who now opened an assault upon them. A

poor fellow was taken ill of cholera on the march, and died before he could reach the fort. Neill had meant to occupy the church and other buildings during the heat of the day, and resume operations in the morning; but on learning of the cholera attack, he took all the Europeans inside the fort, to be near the hospital. But everything was against the men. The heat was intense. The long marches and exposure had weakened them, and the drink had assuredly done them no good; the fort was terribly crowded, notwithstanding that Neill had already sent off two steamer loads of women and children; the barracks were in a wretched condition; there were no punkas nor tatties, and hardly a follower of any description. That same night eight men were buried; next night twenty wanted graves. The terrible outbreak lasted only

three days, and then vanished as rapidly as it had come ; but in these three days there had been nearly a hundred cases of cholera, and more than fifty deaths. Neill fought this enemy as energetically as he went at the more tangible foe. His first act was to chevy all non-combatants out of the fort, except the doctors ; then he pitched upon a masonic building near the river for a cholera hospital ; and before long he had two-thirds of his force under canvas outside the fort.

After the 19th Neill had no occasion to make any more demonstrations, for there remained no enemy in his neighbourhood. He set about organising supplies for the column which, according to his instructions, was to assemble at Allahabad, from which it was to start for the relief of Cawnpore. It was uphill work, for the country was both hos-

tile and wasted. Neill's impetuosity would not let him wait for the slow accumulation of a large force. He bundled off Renaud and a detachment of Fusiliers and 84th, with instructions to press on to Cawnpore and hang liberally by the way. In truth the Allahabad gallows had been by no means idle. On the last day of June, Havelock reached Allahabad, and as senior officer superseded Neill.

CHAPTER XIII.

BEFORE the second day of the siege was over, Mary Home had found a new vocation—she was an hospital nurse. She and several other ladies formed themselves into a company to relieve each other in attendance on the wounded. The task was a ghastly and yet not uncheerful one. Cheerfuller far than sitting listless while the round shot crashed through the rickety buildings amidst the shrieks and wails of terrified women, and still more frightened children. Cheerful in that it relieved the mind from the consciousness of ever-impending death. For the frail buildings were, in

a few days, riddled through and through. Not an atom of them was shot-proof. Ladies were falling dead—slain by grape, round shot, and bullet. Others were crushed beneath falling brickwork, or mutilated by the splinters which flew from shattered sash and panel. It was dreadful work. Few recovered of their wounds in that apology for an hospital. How could it be otherwise, when there was an almost entire want of surgical appliances and of hospital comforts? The most important element of *hygiène*, a supply of water, was wholly wanting. It is a fact that, from the first day of this siege to the last, so much as a spongeful of water was not available for the purpose of ablution. But still Mary Home, Mrs. Moore, and some other women-heroines toiled on, tending the wounded and the dying. These were not alone men—men struck down in

the obstinate defence—there were among them women and children also, whom the cruel missiles of the ruthless Sepoys had snitten with fell impartiality. There was not much, truly, to encourage devoted women. Old Mr. Home, indeed, spent a good deal of time among them—what time he could spare from other duties of a scarcely less pathetic character.

Now and then, gallant, cheery Moore would run in with a sprightly word, and with a smile always on his face. When things were at the worst, he would bid his wife be of good cheer as he passed his arm round her waist, try to get up a laugh among the cowering children, whisper a sentence or two in some corner where lay the mangled form of one who fain would have risen and followed him out into the turmoil of the strife again. Moore was the life and soul

of the garrison. Sir Hugh Wheeler, full of pluck and manhood as the veteran was, was too old to undertake the exposure and fatigue involved in the conduct of the struggle, and without any express edict to that effect, the substantial command appeared to devolve upon Moore by a kind of natural selection.

On the 12th, the ladies were surprised by the sudden cessation of the cannonade. They ran into the verandahs, hopeful that something had happened for the succour of the beleaguered entrenchment. But they soon saw that the sudden silence was but a change of tactics. A general assault was being made in force. On came the cavalry, made mad with drugs, only to recoil, break, and finally run before the relentless fire which streamed upon them from the British batteries. To them succeeded a horde of

infantry, quieter, but more formidable from their better organisation. They strove well to carry the rampart; but it was no use. Every British defender had lying beside him from three to ten muskets loaded with balls and slugs, and after a brief but tough onset the infantry too were crushed back, leaving many a dark-skinned corpse near the muzzles of these deadly weapons. For a time the assailants appeared to have had enough of general assaults, and they reverted to their original programme—which consisted of an unremitting storm of ball, bomb, and bullet.

This had its inevitable effect in time. By the end of the first week, all the pieces of artillery were disabled in various ways, with the exception of two, and all the artillerymen had been killed or wounded. The two remaining pieces were so battered

about that the charge of canister could not be got home in them. These two pieces were withdrawn from the embrasures, and kept in reserve for the purpose of repelling any repetition of the assault which had been once so signally defeated. In order that they might be effectually charged, a demand was made upon the ladies for their stockings, wherewithal to make grape bags. Mrs. Moore laughed as she stripped off and handed over hers, and contentedly thrust her bare feet into a pair of dilapidated slippers. She was a true soldier's wife. But a worse disaster, viewing it in its personal consequences to the ladies, was soon to befall them. On the eighth evening of the bombardment, a shell set fire to the thatch of the hospital barrack. Dry as tinder, the whole barrack was speedily in a blaze. Men worked that night. The wo-

men and children were packed away in safety in the ditch which surrounded the interior of the external wall, and the wounded were removed with splendid alacrity. But the flames were too quick for our people. In spite of every effort two wounded and helpless men perished miserably.

This catastrophe was productive of terrible suffering to the already sorely-distressed women and children. There was not house-room for them all in the yet standing (although half-ruined) barracks, and more than two hundred of them had to live constantly in the open air. They slept on the bare ground by night; by day the tropical sun poured down upon them his burning rays. As fast as screens were erected over them, so fast did the rebel shot bring these frail canopies down, or the rebel shell set

fire to them. At first Mary Home and her friend Mrs. Moore were among this sad company. They and those along with them had to squat in the ditch beneath the shelter of the earthwork, moving as the day waxed and waned, so as to compass ever the slight protection of the shadow. This in a heat varying from 120 to 138 degrees in the shade. Unshod, unkempt, ragged and squalid, haggard and emaciated, parched with drought and faint with hunger, they sat in that terrible ditch waiting for death, dying as they sat! Some of them—of these tender, well-born women—bore children there under circumstances far worse than those of the gipsy tramp at home, whose hour of travail comes to her as she lies under a hedge. The pains of maternity were aggravated by privation; the hope and joy which the humblest mother feels in

her maternity were totally absent here—represented as they were by nothing save the blankest despair. Nor were the women safe even in the ditch. A bomb fell among them and killed seven married women who were sitting there, as well as two men. Mrs. Colonel Williams had her face torn open by a splinter from a shell. Her husband was already dead of apoplexy. Mr. Hilliersden, the station magistrate, was dashed to pieces by a 24-pound ball as he stood talking with his wife, who had lately undergone a premature confinement. A few days more and another shot buried the widow amidst a shower of displaced bricks. Day and night the iron hail never ceased; the round shot came crashing through the frail buildings and hissed across the open space; the shells burst everywhere, and their fragments spread death and destruc-

tion. There was no respite from the pitiless storm.

But there was still an hospital ; and there was still work in it for willing hands. Mary Home, Mrs. Moore, and the children of the latter, again found themselves under shelter, and the two women had their hands full. Besides attending to the sick in any way that was possible, there were the poor children to console and encourage. They never could approximate to a comprehension of the real state of things. Many of them by this time belonged to nobody, for some were wholly orphans ; of others the mothers were dead, and the fathers were wanted in the work of defence. It required constant watchfulness to prevent the little things from finding their way outside the stifling and cramped barracks, in order to find greater scope for their little plays.

Once or twice, indeed, some of them did stray outside, and the Sepoy bullets broke up more than one childish group. It was Mary Home's constant practice, while she could spare herself from the duties of nursing, to try to soften the hardships which these poor children were suffering. She had a large fund of stories, and plenty of invention when this store was exhausted; and she would sit by the hour, with the pale, wistful-eyed children around her, listening to some fairy tale, or some story which always ended happily. There was no security that the story would not be cut short, or, if terminated, that all the listeners would live to hear its concluding words. An ayah, a native nurse, sitting near Mary, and dandling an infant while she listened, had both her legs carried away by a cannon shot.

All suffered dreadfully from want of water, but the children worse than any. From a tank situated outside the south-eastern side of the entrenchment, small supplies were for the first few days procured at a risk which made the water the price of blood; but soon the cordon of the insurgents was drawn up so close that this was rendered unavailable. Then the garrison had to fall back on a well outside the entrenchment in another direction; but the water drawn from it was very costly too. It was from the first the focus of the fire of a hostile battery, the guns of which were kept permanently trained upon it, and the attempt to draw water was the signal for a shower of grape. The framework and machinery were soon demolished, and he who would obtain a bucketful, had to haul the bucket up hand over hand from a depth of sixty

feet, while the enemy made him their special mark. John M'Gillop, an officer of the Civil Service, took upon himself the duty of captain of the well, and he kept the office for more than a week before the enemy contrived to hit their mark. When water was so costly, many, nay, all, went thirsty ; but the children did not know how to bear the deprivation without complaints. They, poor little ones, tried miserable palliatives. They sucked fragments of old water-bags, and chewed scraps of canvas and pieces of leather, to try and get a single drop of moisture on their parched lips. Then a big-hearted man, unable to see them suffer, would start on a perilous journey across the plain to the well, and sometimes he came back, and sometimes he did not.

And during this fearful season where was Mr. Home ? He seemed to become young,

and strong, and buoyant under the calamity which withered the energies of others. The Roman Catholic priest died, though he was reckoned the best fed man in the garrison, owing to the devotion of the Irish soldiery, who gave to the priest tithes of all they possessed—viz., their food. Mr. Home's missionary friend was dead, too. His aged mother was among the beleaguered, and the son was wont to bring her out at eventide into the verandah for a breath of air. The malignity of the dastardly foe spared not even an old woman. She was struck down by a bullet, and her sufferings were so intense that her son went mad at the sight of them, and died a raving maniac. But Mary was yet safe, and yet not broken in spirit; and her father's devotion to his duty had in it something of the sublime. Mr. Home was not a fighting man. Had need been,

indeed, he would have taken musket in hand, and sold his life as dearly as the youngest and strongest, in defence of the women and little ones ; but there were men enow without him to man the posts, and he felt that he had a post of his own where he could be of more service than in wielding his feeble arm of the flesh. Unless one were smitten down so suddenly that the life was out of him instantaneously, David Home was by the side of the wounded and the dying whether in the batteries or in the hospital. Circumstances prevented any regular public worship ; but there was many an informal prayer-meeting during these weary three weeks. When he could be spared from the hospital, Mr. Home kissed his daughter, and went forth undauntedly with his prayer-book in his hand to visit the batteries. He had strange congregations verily.

Men begrimed with powder listened to the prayers and psalms he read, their Amen contrasting with the bellow of the round shot and the firing of the bullet as it struck the rampart behind which they crouched. Each congregation was thinner than the last, for people died very fast in that fatal entrenchment.

And Mr. Home had yet other work than to read scraps of the Litany to living beings. The dead had to be buried—not as dogs, but with a word or two of prayer ere the bodies were committed to their last resting-place. There was no churchyard within the boundaries of the entrenchment. But there was a well about two hundred yards away, which was early selected as the common sepulchre. Night after night the dead of the day were borne out thither, with stealthy step and a scant funeral procession,

for the rebel guns swept the mouth of the well. Within its depths were buried, during these three weeks, two hundred and fifty English people, a fourth of the whole garrison.

Amid hunger, thirst, misery, and all but abject despair, the garrison struggled on day after day. The blacker the prospect became, the more desperately did our countrymen fight.

CHAPTER XIV.

HECTOR MACDONALD, eager to be in the forefront of the battle, had asked Colonel Neill to allow him to join the detachment of the Madras Fusiliers which, under the command of Major Renaud, left Allahabad on the afternoon of the 30th, the day that General Havelock arrived. Neill, however, had found him so useful as a clerk that he refused, and very much against his will Hector remained behind. The time was not, however, allowed to hang heavy on the hands of any of those left behind in Allahabad. Havelock was, as Mick Sullivan expressed it, "as busy as a dog in a fair," col-

lecting from all quarters carts, bullocks, hackeries, and camels; organising a little squadron of volunteer cavalry, composed of planters, civil servants, and officers of native disbanded regiments, and getting together stores of all kinds. Hector was kept very hard at work, and the bustle became terrific when, on the 3rd of July, young Chalmers, of the 45th Native Infantry, rode into Allahabad with intelligence, sent back by Major Renaud, that the Cawnpore garrison had been massacred by the Nana. At this news Havelock at once announced his determination to start next day; and everybody wrought double tides to get things in order for this. But it could not be done. There were not enough of baggage cattle; and with reluctance the general had to postpone his departure for three more days. On the evening of the 5th there came into Allaha-

bad, by bullock dawk, four companies of the 78th Highlanders, who, after their Persian campaign, had come round by steamer to Bengal, and after a short halt at Chinsurah, and having a little amusement there with the mutineers, had been pressed on to Allahabad by dawk. It was a pitiless afternoon of rain, and the sturdy Highlanders were located hurriedly in tents pitched outside the glacis of the fort. Hector's heart naturally warmed towards his countrymen, and he went out among the tents to have a "crack" with some of them. He found them squatting under canvas with their knees up to their noses, and their greatcoats over all, for the tents leaked badly, and the poor fellows, weary as they were, did not venture to lie down at full length. Among the first he came across was Colour-Sergeant Christy, the stalwart, hardy colour-sergeant

of the Grenadier company. They had not been in conversation five minutes when it came out that Christy was a Strathspey man ; and when he found that Hector was a neighbour when at home, he insisted that his right place was in the ranks of the 78th. He so keenly stuck to this point, that before they parted he succeeded in convincing Hector, and they separated with a promise to meet next morning and go and see the adjutant as a preliminary.

When Hector returned to the fort, he told his chum Sullivan of the effort he intended to make. Sullivan had found a cousin in the ranks of the Fusiliers, and had professed to Hector his intention of asking permission to join that regiment. Accordingly, when Hector told him he meant to try for the Highlanders, he took it for granted that there was to be a breaking up

of the confederacy, and he expressed very feelingly to Mick his regret at what seemed an inevitable parting. Mick said nothing, but pressed his chum's hand with a hearty squeeze, and then went off to bed in an apparently deep melancholy.

In the morning sturdy Colour-Sergeant Christy was true to his tryst. He took Hector off to an unburnt bungalow outside the fort, which had been taken up as quarters by the officers of the 78th on the previous night, and ushered him into the presence of the adjutant. Hector was struck at once with the belief that he had seen this officer somewhere before, but discipline, of course, restrained him from asking any questions. The sergeant explained to him the purport of the application, upon which he asked Hector for his pocket-ledger, in which was entered his name, place of nativity, and date of enlistment.

“Macdonald ! Macdonald !” muttered the adjutant, as he read ; “ what the deuce— what will happen next ?” Then, addressing Hector, “ Are you not the son of the Laird of Macdonald ?”

Hector blushed, but manfully owned that such was the case.

“ Then what the devil brings you here with a corporal’s stripes on your arm ? Why, your father’s son ought to hold the Queen’s commission.”

Hector briefly muttered something about family disagreements, and the adjutant went on—

“ Don’t you remember me ? I’ve been in your father’s house many a time. Don’t you remember M’Pherson of Ardersier ?”

“ Of course I do,” replied Hector, “ and I thought I knew your face, but of course I didn’t venture to ask.”

“Well, well, my lad, now you are here, we must have you in the 78th at all risks. I know Hamilton will make a personal matter of it with the General when he knows everything.”

So he rose, and went into another room, where Hector could hear the sound of an animated conversation. While it was going on, the Sergeant-Major of the 78th, Hart, an Irishman, and as smart a gentlemanly non-commissioned officer as was in the service, entered, and behind him who should follow but Mr. Sullivan! Hector would have spoken to his chum, but just at this moment Mr. M'Pherson came back, and Mick formed up opposite, and stood to attention with an air of preternatural gravity.

“Here is a man, sir,” said Sergeant-Major Hart, “who comes to me with some queer story about his chum being about to be

transferred into the Highlanders, and that he is bound to follow, if he should give himself up as a deserter from us."

The adjutant glanced at Hector, who replied by a look of intelligence, and then he took a long stare at Sullivan. After this mental inventory, "What is your name, my man?" he asked.

"Michael Donald Mactavish O'Sullivan, sur," responded Mick, with a face as solemn as a mute's at a funeral.

"What countryman are you?" asked the sergeant-major.

"Troth, major," replied Mick, "it's to the darlint county Tipperary I belong, and bedad but I think we're counthrymen, for I would take me oath to the praste it's yoursilf is from the county Carrick."

"Never mind where the sergeant-major is from, my man," said the adjutant, "but

tell me where you got your two middle names. They are surely not common in Tipperary?"

"Och, yer honour, I was christened by thim two after me grandmother, and she was, I belave, a pure-bred Scotsman. Ye see, sur, that's one of my chafe raisons for wanting to jine the 78th."

"Well, and what corps do you now belong to? You are a nondescript-looking mongrel, with a mixture of the dragoon, the sapper, and the fusilier about you."

"Troth, yer honour, an' it's mesilf hardly knows what the divil I am now at all, at all. I was onst in the ould 30th Light, and since then I've been a staff-offisher, and the divil knows what, till now I belave I'm aide-de-conk to Colonel Naill, and a tartar is that same Naill."

"And so I suppose you are a brother

‘aide-de-conk’ to Corporal Macdonald there, and want to be along with your comrade?”

“Be me soul, yer honour, ye’ve just hit it, and it’s mesilf will pray for ye through purgethory and out at the other side, if ye’ll do your best for a man that’s a half Scotsman by his grandmother Donald’s side.”

The adjutant again disappeared, and this time when he returned he was accompanied by “old Watty” himself, as the gallant Colonel Hamilton was universally called in the regiment. In about an hour they returned, and Mr. M’Pherson told Hector that the matter had been arranged satisfactorily, and that he and his chum now belonged to the 78th. After the necessary formal entries in the books, the adjutant directed Colour-Sergeant Christy, to whose company both were posted, to take them to the

quarter-master and see what he could do for them.

Quartermaster-Sergeant Tulloch was a great big fat fellow of a Ross-shireman, who suffered terribly in the Indian heat, but never seemed to lose flesh, though in a chronic condition of profuse perspiration. Christy explained the object of their coming; at which Tulloch, who was rather choleric, burst out—

“Deil hae Mr. M‘Phairson, dinna he ken better than tae be listin’ recruits on the line o’ march whan we’ve left every clout ahint at Chinsurah? Whatna gait does he think I can rig oot twa fellows as gin we waur in a bairracks at hame? I canna do onything wi’ ye, men.”

Christy, who was a merry sort of fellow, and saw the prospect of a lark, recalled to Tulloch’s mind the kits he had by him of

two men who had died of cholera just as the detachment was leaving Chinsurah. One of these had been a very tall man, the other comparatively short. The short man's clothing he handed to Sullivan, and the other's to Hector. Tulloch occupied a civil servant's dismantled residence, and the two newly-made Highlanders went into separate rooms to rig themselves out then and there. Christy followed Hector to tell him there was no occasion for him to put on the kilt, for that the detachment had left their kilts behind at Chinsurah, and were wearing on the march their dungaree trousers, a pair of which Hector had already on. Sullivan, however, he allowed to proceed to dress, and, with bursts of suppressed laughter, Tulloch and he listened to Mick "d——ing the quare blankets" with intense fervour, as he tried in vain to dress himself

properly. At length he appeared to be successful, and they heard him sally out and go wandering about the empty rooms as if in search of something. Hector, by this time, had joined them, and the three went to find where Sullivan had got to. As they traversed a passage they heard his voice in a room at the far end, and walking on tip-toe they presently reached the door, and there was Mr. Sullivan, drawn up to his full height in front of a great panel-mirror. He certainly cut an extraordinary figure. In the first place, the kilt was very much too short for him, and a yard or two of naked leg projected from below it. Then he had fastened his sporran on behind instead of at the front, where it hung like a horse's tail. His plaid was put on something after the manner of a comforter, and his legs and feet were encased in his long cavalry welling-

tons, from the heels of which projected fiercely his spurs. He had struck an attitude, and was soliloquising—

“Be the holy! Michael Donald Mac-tavish O’Sullivan, an’ it’s yoursilf is the purty crature intirely. Troth, an’ it would puzzle that dacent woman your mother to know the fruit of her womb in a kilt. Shure, an’ it’s a beautiful dress, an’ the hoigth of free vintilation. Supposin’ I was sitting down in an ant-hill! Och, musha, an’ hwhat would Tipperary say if she were to see me this day? Faix,” he went on, after a long, scrutinising stare, “it’s mesilf is doubtful whether I’m hwhat you would call dacent—but the devil a haporth care I,” with a sudden burst of reassurance. “Shure, if I’m ondacent, that’s the Quane’s look-out; may the heavins be her bed!”

At this the listeners could not help burst-

ing into a fit of laughter, which Mick overheard, and therefore brought his soliloquy to an abrupt termination. He appeared rather inclined to be rusty when he found he had been sold, and was not to have the kilt after all; but consoled himself with the ant-hill view of the case. He and Hector left the two non-commissioned officers to make their simple arrangements for leaving the staff and joining their new regiment. On the road Hector asked Mick what on earth had prompted him to give the adjutant the two intermediate names he had assumed.

“Och,” replied Mick, “it was a sthroke of policy. I belave it was that touch of the blarney that did the thing, me son. Besides, it’s mesilf manes to go in for being a pure Highlander out an’ out, now I’m among thim. Bedad, an’ if it be nicessary, I would catch the itch for the credit of the regiment.

I mane to go through a regular course of the bagpipe drill, wid a piper playin' at one ear and another at the other, an' if I can bring mesilf to stand that for ten minutes widout boltin', I think I'll do."

Hector went straight to Colonel Neill's apartments in the fort, and found that gallant officer, although as busy as usual, yet ready to spare him a word of advice and encouragement. Hector had grown to love this stern, rugged-visaged, yet soft-hearted Ayrshireman, with a great clinging love and respect. The lad's eyes filled with water as he stammered out some words of explanation of the step he had just taken. He was a Highlander, he told the Lowland colonel, and the Highland heart of him warmed to the men of his own land and blood. He felt as if he could fight better when the bagpipes were playing a pibroch

behind him. Besides, he said, the more he saw of the staff service the more he was convinced that the opportunities for gaining distinction and seeing real soldiering were fewer there than in the ranks. And then he tried to falter out a word or two of gratitude to Neill, and to give expression to the deep feelings which stirred his heart.

The stern colonel heard him silently to the end, tugging meanwhile at his grizzled moustache. When he had finished, and stood silent before him, Neill's deep, calm, yet nervous accents broke the silence.

"My lad," said he, "I have grown to love you like my own son. There is stuff in you. You can work like a horse, and, what is more, you can talk like a Christian. My lad, I don't wonder at your choice in going with your own people. This day, God knows," and here he brought his heavy

hand down on the table, "I would give that right hand to be the colonel of the Cameronians. Not but what the 'Lambs' are good lads—right good lads—but I am a Lowland Scot to the last drop of my blood. Then, too, I believe you are right about the other point. There are better chances for a fellow like you in the ranks than on the staff, and, if I read you right, Macdonald, you won't miss a chance. Don't be discouraged if one does not turn up just at once. We have all to bide our time. Mine I thought was come when the route came at Madras. It has gone again just at present, for General Havelock is up, and I am to remain here and keep Allahabad. Oh ! if I could but have got these infernal hackeries together a week earlier ! We should have been half way to Cawnpore by this time, and at work upon the black hides of

these Sepoy butchers. But—well, my lad, you don't want to know how I feel on the matter. Good-bye, and God bless you, young fellow ! Read your Bible, obey orders, look straight to your front, and never spare a Sepoy. There, shake hands, my lad—now you can go.”

Hector's lip trembled as he went out from the presence of the Fusilier colonel, and it was some time ere he cared to seek his comrade. When he did so, he found him taking an effusive farewell of his late friends of the Madras Fusiliers, with whom Sullivan had become remarkably popular. After spending an hour or two in the fort, they came outside, and Christy gave them a firelock apiece, and a supply of ammunition. The 78th were not as yet supplied throughout with Enfields—only a few men in each company who were known to be

good marksmen were furnished with them, and the remainder were armed with the old pieces. Then they turned into a tent along with some new-found comrades, and the talk ran for a time on the qualities and qualifications of the officers of the company, Captain Bouverie, and Lieutenants Campbell, Crowe, and Welsh. The last thing Hector heard before he dropped off to sleep, wrapped in a great-coat, was Mick Sullivan and 'a Skyeman exemplifying the philological similarity existing between the Irish and the Gaelic languages by conversing each in his own native tongue.

CHAPTER XV.

IT was the evening of the 25th of June.

The last desperate assault had been repulsed on the 23rd. Parched with thirst, blistered with heat, faint for lack of food, the British ladies lay or sat in holes dug under cover of the entrenchment. What of them were left were thus lodged. The sun had slanted its rays over their heads, and the fire of the ruthless enemy had temporarily slackened. Mary Home was trying—hard task!—to amuse a couple of children whose mother had been shot two days before. The task was hard, for the little creatures' lips were cracked and parched,

and their eyes were large, and stared out of the thin and famine-shrunken faces with a sad solicitude which was very unchild-like. In the same place of miserable safety sat Mrs. Moore and her gallant husband, and he was telling the party how terms had been come to with the Maharajah, and that he hoped the siege was over.

Next day he and his brother officer Whiting, along with Mr. Roche, the postmaster, struck the bargain, and the departure was fixed for the following morning. The Nana agreed that the garrison should carry out with them their arms and sixty rounds of ammunition to each man ; that conveyances to the waterside should be provided for the sick, the wounded, and the women and children ; and that a sufficiency of properly-provisioned boats should be in waiting at the landing-place at the foot of the ravine

near Suttee Chowra. The tired garrison lay down this last night, and rested as men do rest who have not known an hour's unbroken sleep for weeks. When early morning came all were astir. There was not much actual work to be done, it is true. There was no great ceremony of packing up. But sad and fatal as the place had been, its very sadness, the very hardships which had been suffered within it, the anguish which had been endured, seemed to invest it with a strange endearing charm. Mr. Home took his daughter's arm, and walked outside the entrenchment to that fatal well, to which had been consigned within three weeks two hundred and fifty British dead. Mr. Home had stood by its brink many a time in the dead of night, as the stealthy burial was going on, and had prayed a short fervent prayer over the

great grave. Then he had never blenched—never would the old man be persuaded from his sacred office. Now he broke down utterly. Standing by the margin of that fearful charnel-pit, this old Scottish clergyman, who, having spent his life in the midst of a quietude which was almost stagnation, had in his latter days been tried with a trial so unexampled, burst into a passion of weeping which it was something terrible to look upon. His daughter led him away as soon as she could; but they did not leave the place solitary. There were others besides them who had come to take a farewell of it—husbands whose wives its black depths had swallowed up; fathers whose fair-haired lads, or whose happy-faced daughters, had found a burial-place in it.

But the time was come when the quick

and dead had to part. Some of the women got into bullock-carts, others were mounted on the backs of elephants. The wounded were brought out by the sound, and placed in litters. At length all was ready. Moore gave his final instructions, and a *doch an dhorras*, consisting of a drink of water, was handed round, and then the cavalcade started. Moore, manly and cheerful when all else were depressed, led the way with his few men of the 32nd. The palanquins containing the women and children came next, and then those with the wounded, whose pallid forms might be discerned through the sliding panels, their wounds rudely bound up with strips of women's gowns and petticoats, and bandages of old stockings. Mary Home was inside one of these, supporting on her lap the head of a poor fellow who had been grievously

wounded the day before. Her father was among the fighting men who brought up the rear—a gallant, ragged, indomitable band. A martinet colonel would have recoiled from it with disgust—for, save for a regimental button here and there, he would have found it difficult to recognise the gaunt, hairy, sun-scorched squad as British soldiers. But, although our trim carpet-soldiers would have disowned these few war-worn men in their dirty flannel rags and fragmentary nankeen breeches, their swarthy, stealthy-eyed foemen knew them for what they were, unconquerable British soldiers—and with scowling faces and muttered curses they gave ground as the white Sahibs came on, with no dressing indeed in their straggling ranks, but each man with his rifle upon his shoulder, the deadly revolver in his belt, and the fearless glance in his hollow eye.

Over the plain past St. John's Church, the nondescript cavalcade slowly wound, till its leader, Moore, reached the white-painted bridge that carried the road over the ravine. At the river mouth of the ravine was Suttee Chowra, the place of embarkation; and leaving the road, he turned aside, he and his handful of the 32nd men, down into the bed of the ravine. Slowly and cumbrously the procession followed him. Mary Home looked out from the palanquin, and she saw behind her on the bridge, and on either side of the ravine, a sea of dusky faces. It might have been compassion and concern, it might have been curiosity, and it might have been the intensity of expectation; but she noticed that every countenance bore the same mysterious expression, and the Scottish girl's heart misgave her. Her thought was of her father, not of

herself, and gently laying down the wounded head which lay in her lap, she bade the bearers halt, and got out of the palanquin. Going backwards now, and again halting as the procession struggled by her, she came abreast of the straggling order of the fighting men, where she saw her father walking by the side of Thomson, Delafosse, and Whiting. The old man had a happy light in his eye, and a cheerful smile on his face, as he called his daughter to his side, and chid her for exposing herself to the growing heat.

“Ah, Mary,” said the old minister. “Please God, we shall yet see the heather hills of bonnie Scotland once more !”

Mary could do no less than answer cheerfully, but before she had ranged herself with her father, she had seen a sight which struck a chill of terror to her heart. She had seen Vibart, of the 2nd Cavalry, who at some

distance behind all, was acting single-handed as a rear-guard, turn off the high road down into the lane, and the moment he had done so, she had observed a double line of armed Sepoys form across the head of the gorge, as if to bar all exit in that direction. The idea of a trap at once struck her—but to what end was it to communicate her apprehensions? With an inward prayer that she might be wrong in her fears, she kept silence and walked onward.

As the head of the procession reached the waterside, Moore's 32nd men fell to one side, to form something like a guard over the embarkation. The boats, looking with their thatched roofs like cottages in the water, lay aground on the sands of the Ganges, a little distance from the bank; and the officers, as each came up, fell to work to carry the women and children and the wounded on

board. The task was a heavy one, for the Hindoo boatmen and bearers, maintaining an ominous silence, lifted not a helping hand. The officers stood in the water, and from hand to hand lifted in the weak ones as they were set down on the shore. The weary task at length was all but accomplished, the soldiers' guard was broken up, and the men were making their way to the various boats. The bustle over, a silence which was almost oppressive prevailed. A sudden creeping thrill ran through every heart as that silence was cut by the loud blast of a trumpet blown up in the ravine. Well might it thrill the heart—it was the signal for the foul treachery. A posse of troopers blazed out a volley from their carbines at the doomed boats, almost, in their haste, shooting down the native boatmen, who were splashing their way towards land. The Englishmen in the water

had faced about, and were commencing a return fire, when the piercing shrieks of the women in the boats caused them to turn their heads. No wonder that they shrieked—the boatmen had fired the thatch, and hardly a boat but was in a blaze from stem to stern. Dazed and bewildered, our men dashed towards the boats to help the women. They had not reached them when a withering fire of grape and musketry broke forth upon them from either shore. The scene was pandemonium. The wounded were burnt to death under the blazing thatch ; the women in frantic terror were cowering in the water behind the bulwarks of the blazing boats, escaping the fire from one bank only to be exposed to it from another. It was fine practice the barbarian traitors made upon the British people in the water. They durst not come hand to hand with the dreaded

Sahibs ; but why should they, since it was only a work of time to shoot them all down? Mary Home, with a child of Mrs. Moore's in her arms, was clinging to the prow of a boat as her eyes sought her father amidst the butchery—but she saw him not. She saw three boats at last floated, and numbers of her countrymen wading and swimming to them, as they were shoved out into the stream; and then, after twenty minutes of the pelting storm of lead, she became aware that it was subsiding. There were, indeed, but few now to shoot at in that little space of slaughter between the shore and the boats. Those who were left were not much to be feared; for the fighting men were pushing for Vibart's boat, which, luckier than the other two, had gone clear, and was floating down the stream. When the brave Sepoy troopers thought their time had come, pistol in hand, and sabre

carried like a butcher's knife between their teeth, these heroes plunged into the stream to finish the massacre. It was easy work. There were but the old, the feeble, and the wounded to despatch. The women and children they had orders to spare, but their blood was up—their chivalric blood—and they were too busy to be particular. They shot, they hacked, they beat down with clubs, they caught up little children and tore them limb from limb by main force; of other infants their good swords drank the blood. And now Mary Home saw her father. He was standing in the water close by a charred boat. On his shoulder was a little boy he had caught up from it, as the flames pursued the laddie. He had been wounded in the head, and the blood was streaming down his white hair on to the fair neck of the boy. But, wounded and sore as he was, he

yet, although weaponless, kept his form erect, and his face straight to the foe, as did his Cameronian forefather before the murderous prelatie dragoons. He had pulled forth his little pocket bible, and loud and clear amidst the din of the slaughter arose the voice of the man of God :—

“ In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust ; let me never be ashamed ; deliver me in Thy righteousness.

“ Bow down Thine ear unto me : deliver me speedily ; be Thou my strong rock for a house of defence to save me.

“ For thou art my rock and my fortress ; therefore for Thy name’s sake lead me and guide me.

“ Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me ; for Thou art my strength.”

A trooper dashed the book from his hands, another caught the boy by the heels, tore him from the old man’s shoulder, and with the living infant struck him over the head as with a club. Beaten down to his knees, David Home was not yet bereft of speech. As his daughter rushed toward him, she

heard his last accents clear and joyous, as he
went on with the Psalm,

“ Into Thy hands I commit my spirit”—

And then a trooper slew him with a sword,
and the life-blood of the Scottish minister
gave a deeper tint to the already ensanguin-
ed waters of the Ganges.

CHAPTER XVI.

MARY HOME rushed towards her father, to save him or to die with him. Before she reached his side he had been slaughtered, and the trooper who had killed her father confronted her with dripping sword. He raised his sword arm as if to cut her down too, but, changing his mood, he caught her roughly by the arm and began dragging her shorewards. As the half-fainting girl staggered along, half walking, half dragged by his rude grip, a brother ruffian made a snatch at the earring she wore, and tore it out of its flesh hold. Bleeding, faint, and oppressed with the inability to weep,

she was hurled upon the bank, and her captor turned back into the water in search of fresh victims. Here Mary found a few other women, with some children, and soon more were congregated. The troopers dragged them out from the charred woodwork of the stranded boats, and hunted them out of the water as if they had been so many otters. The work was a slow one, for many of the British ladies clung with desperation to the blackened timbers ; while others, expecting a worse fate, strove to drown rather than be taken. At length, however, all who were alive were brought together on the landing-place, and Tantia Topee, who had the management of the morning's work, placed sentries around them to save them from the molestation of the brutal troopers. Verily, the congregation was a sorrowful one. Almost all bleeding, some from wounds,

others from lacerations, where the gallant Sepoy cavalry men had torn their ornaments from their flesh, and wet, soiled with mud and sand, shoeless, and bareheaded, they sat there, some on logs of timber, some in the sand, a hundred and twenty-five in number. The triumphant throng of demons yelled and shouted and danced around the trembling little company, the sun poured down its blistering beams upon them, and the insolent eyes of the brutal mutineers shot more baleful glances still. They were too wretched to speak much. Now and then a mother caught up a child and strained it to her bosom, and a whisper passed occasionally of speculation whether any at all had escaped. For themselves they had no hope, and with a shuddering tacit consent all reference to their future was avoided. With a pitiful remembrance of a home custom, now that they

were, as they thought, about to part, these women fell to stealthily exchanging little keepsakes of each other. A ring was given, and a little breast brooch was taken ; a lock of baby's hair was thrust into the bosom, and a thimble or a bodkin was the simple return. As they sat there, they saw the seventeen survivors out of those who were in the two boats which had stranded on the other side of the stream, cross and march past them up into the ravine. Women sitting there saw their husbands among these seventeen, and some time after they heard the crash of a volley of musketry, which to them was plainer language than would have been the passing knell from the church tower at home.

When it was almost noon, Tantia Topce ordered the company to rise. Feebly and wearily the wretched women did so. Friends

tried to cling to friends. Mary fain would have walked with Mrs. Moore and helped her with her children ; but with a fiendish malignity the marshals of the procession broke in upon these little arrangements. The women with children were put in front ; the others followed in loose order. Mary was among the last. And so under the midday sun they tramped wearily back the way they had come in the early morning. They plodded up the rugged bed of the ravine, past the bridge, past the European Church and St. John's Church, past the abandoned entrenchment—which in its dilapidation looked so familiar to them—through the often-fought-for outposts, and then across the plain. The appointed guard hemmed them in, and outside it, all the course of their weary pilgrimage, there surged a wild throng of half-frantic Sepoy

soldiers. These demons danced fiendish dances of triumph around the Mem Sahibs and the Missy Babas, before whom a month ago they were so obsequious; they shouted ribaldry which it was consolation that ignorance of their language prevented some at least from comprehending. At times they made an onslaught on the guard, which that body had some difficulty in beating off—and more than once the devils were inside the cordon, to the shuddering horror of the wretched women exposed to their maltreatment. There were, it is true, some in that raving throng who were there with other motives, and were full of other feelings. There were native servants there, whose tears, as they flowed at the sight of the indignities to which their mistresses were exposed, had to be repressed for fear of the consequences if such weakness should have

been observed. At length the weary tramp was over. The party halted in front of the tent of the Nana. That chivalric gentleman came forth to meet his guests as he had often done before when he entertained them at Bithoor. With sarcastic politeness he inquired after their health, hoped they had enjoyed their morning's pleasure and their noon-day walk, and was assiduous in his inquiries after their husbands. Azimoolah, the supple courtier, who had learnt his graces in Mayfair drawing-rooms, was still more sarcastically courteous; his mocking bows would have done honour to Count D'Orsay himself. Tantia Topee, with a splash or two of blood on his grim countenance, stood looking on with that saturnine taciturnity which was his characteristic; and the Amazon courtesan Azeezim peeped forth through the lattice-work upon the fair-hair-

ed daughters of another clime. When the mockery was over, the Nana turned to Jwala Penhad, and ordered him to take the English ladies to the Savada House, and confine them there until further orders. This "Savada House" was a building of some pretension, formerly some kind of charitable institution. Its name then had been the "Salvador," and it was in the immediate proximity of the Nana's tent. The ladies waited in the sun while two large rooms were cleared out for their reception, and then they were turned into these, and a guard set over them. Here at least they were in peace, if in bitter discomfort and sad tribulation. Then those who had been parted in the journey from the Fisherman's Temple at the landing-place, were free to renew their companionships of woe.

CHAPTER XVII.

NEXT day was a busy day indeed. The baggage, having been cut down to the very lowest limits, was placed in position ready packed ; and as fast as the carriages came in, which they continued to do up till half-past three, all hands were on fatigue duty getting it distributed upon the various conveyances. It was frightfully hot, and the Highlanders felt it the more because they had not the kilt, and instead of the khakee clothing, had their thick woollen tunics as their only wear. But the forefathers of the north-countrymen, at Killiecrankie and elsewhere, had a habit of going to work among the enemy in their shirts,

and their descendants inaugurated their imitation of the ancestral example in this respect by beginning with the loading of the baggage. Apart from the heat it was by no means pleasant work, for dismal splashes of hot rain came down at intervals, and wetted ground, men, and baggage impartially. But the fellows were in good heart. The 78th men had got splendidly seasoned to all the vicissitudes of the eastern climate during their victorious campaign in Persia, and apart from their bravery, which is a national characteristic, a victorious campaign is a capital engenderer of the wholesome belief that to conquer is simply a matter of course. There was not much brag about these sturdy Celts—in fact, Mr. Sullivan, with his racketsy cheeriness, imparted in confidence to Hector his apprehension that “they were a set of sulky bastes.”

Mick himself was full of spirits. Baggage-loading he seemed to consider an amusement somewhat akin to haymaking. He chucked the things about in a highly reckless manner, and shouldered tremendous weights with the sheer wantonness of strength. The grim Highland veterans looked at him with a mixture of compassion and contempt, and one particularly crusty "old act" fellow, the "crib-biter" of the company, remarked to him, with a sneer, "Faith, Paddy, gin ye've hed twa or three whambles ow'r wi' the cholery, and gotten the rheumatics in yer hinder-end wi' sittin' day and nicht on the damp grun', forbye a spell or twa o' short commons, ye'll no be sae fell souple, I'm thinkin'."

Mick was ready with his reply, stopping, as he delivered it, with a gigantic bullock-trunk on his broad shoulders :

“Faix, an’ be the powers, Donald, it’s a beautiful object intirely that the cholera and the rheumatics and the short commons has made of yoursilf. Be jabbers, an’ if they’re short of figger-heads for door-knockers in your counthry, it’s mesilf wouldn’t advise ye to go home at all, at all, for they’re sure to covet that ould mug of yours, ye cantankerous ould divil !”

And so Mick went his way with his bullock-trunk; and Donald, having discovered that the Patlander was too many for him at the “gab,” grumbled no more audibly, but was content to mutter his growlings in a *sotto voce* tone.

At length everything was in readiness, and young Dick Pearson, of the 78th, whom Havelock had selected as his field-bugler, sounded the “general parade.” The regimental buglers took up the song, and the

men having got their belts on, came out by twos and threes on to the open parade ground. On the right of the line there stood Maude's six guns. It was perhaps as queer a battery of Royal Artillery as ever was seen. Maude, in his hurried rush from Ceylon, had only brought thirty regular artillerymen with him, and no guns. He had got his guns out of the Allahabad Arsenal, and his artillerymen from a variety of sources. Home-stayers who know anything about the Royal Artillery are wont to associate the force with trim harness, mounted drivers, a dashing detachment, and splendid horseflesh. The "grey battery" is a sight not to be paralleled every day. But their preconceptions would have been dreadfully shocked by the turn out of Maude's battery. His guns were drawn by wretched "shargars" of undersized cart

bullocks, unaccustomed to the work, and wholly unsuited for it; and when it was necessary to give an order to the native drivers, it had first to be shouted to an interpreter, and conveyed by him at second hand to the drivers. So much for the noble array of artillery. Now for the cavalry, which, in accordance with the regulations, held the next place in the line. Havelock was not strong in hussars or dragoons, heavy or light. The simple truth is, he had not a single regular cavalryman. His mounted force, all told, numbered eighteen sabres, drawn by volunteers who had been planters, civil servants, and native infantry officers. There was not much to boast of among them in the way of uniform or uniformity, if we except the uniformity of their valour. Next to this handful of mounted men came the companies of the 64th, whom

Havelock had seen fighting at Mohuṃra in the spring. Next to them were the four companies of the old Ross-shire Highlanders. The flank company on the right was the stalwart grenadiers, in whose ranks Hector and Sullivan had both been incorporated. There was never a finer grenadier company in any regiment in the British service, and it was almost exclusively national. There were Rosses, and Mackenzies, and Mackays in it by the half-dozen, and as for Donalds, Hart, the Irish sergeant-major, had been heard to mutter in despair over the company-roll, that "the grenadiers were all Donalds together, and be d——d to them!" Their captain was a naturalized Scot—Captain Bouverie—and the subalterns were Campbell, a splendid Argyleshire man, Crow, another bird from the same nest, and Welsh. The coloured-sergeant's name was Christy,

and Reid was a noble specimen of a company sergent. Then came No. 4 company, whose captain, Bogle, was as gallant a lowland Scot as ever came out of Ayrshire; then No. 6 company (Captain Mackenzie), and on the left flank the light company, Lieutenant Hunter in command. The whole muster was something under three hundred men. Out to the front stood gallant old Colonel Hamilton, his arms folded across the saddle of his horse; and young Herbert Macpherson, the adjutant, was like a lamp-lighter, here, there, and everywhere. In the rear of the centre "Muckle Tulloch," the quartermaster-sergeant, reared his ponderous bulk, his jolly, merry face looking over his portly chest, lubricated with its streams of chronic perspiration. Had he possessed the gift of second sight he might hardly have looked so cheerful—and yet who

knows? For Tulloch was a man who could look death in the face with much the same indifference as he would his dinner—or, indeed, rather less. On the left of the Highlanders were the 84th Queen's, who had been sent for from Rangoon in February, when the first outbreak took place at Barrackpore. They had fouled the barrels of their muskets against the mutineers already, and were heartily eager for more of the same grim amusement. Next to them was a detachment of Brazier's Loodianahs, native Sikhs, who stuck to their colours at Allahabad, and hated the Sepoys with a hatred seven times more intense than that which animated the bosoms of the Europeans. On the extreme right of the line, so as to form the rearguard on the march, was a detachment of "Neill's Babies," the 1st Madras Fusiliers. They were the pluckiest fellows

in the world, and the most consummate rascals. The Company's European troops were a queer medley. Warley was open to all, whether to the gentleman who had gone to the dogs, or the deserter from the Queen's troops; there were no questions asked, so long as a recruit was a proper man, and passed the doctor. Once out in India, they for the most part abandoned all ideas of ever seeing home again, and took for their motto, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." And die they did pretty quickly—for arrack and the rum of the bazaar do not conduce to longevity in such a climate as India. But Warley fed the stream, and sanitary notions had not taken deep root in India; so the "God-forgotten, as they were wont to call themselves, rattled on merrily through life, playing with death as if life were a skittle-ground.

They were indeed strange fellows, these Company's Englishmen. Splendid fighters, good campaigners, soldiers reliable in every respect if kept away from drink—so long as they remained in India; and not worth their salt when they left it. India and Company's discipline spoiled them for anything else. When the Company's raj came to an end, and our Government, in the plenitude of its wisdom, lost three-fourths of the Company's Europeans from a penny-wise refusal to give them a fresh bounty, the fellows came home by ship-loads, and 'listed again in batches, after about a fortnight's spree to work off their loot. Charles Street did a great stroke of work that autumn, and, as they sent the strapping Madras artilleryman or Bengal cavalryman to his regiment at Dublin, or his depot at Canterbury, the men-buyers thought they deserved well of

their country and their commanding officers. If the latter thought so too for a brief period, the delusion was soon dispelled. The re-enlisted Indiaman signalized the taking of his bounty by a week's absence. He went to hospital to get out of his pack drill. He could cut the sword exercise like a paladin, but he could not and would not groom a horse or pipeclay his belts. He was, in short, for all his splendid physique, an abject failure as a re-enlisted home service man. A return of the number of Company's Europeans enlisted in '59-'60 for regiments on home service who are still soldiering in such regiments, would be a curious document. It would prove how few invaliding, desertions, and deaths have left. Many re-enlisted at once for Indian service, and these have done better, although disgusted not a little at the difference in the discipline

between Queen's service and that of the Company of regretful memory.

But this long digression has kept the little army standing on parade too long. It was just four o'clock in the afternoon when Havelock mounted his horse, and, accompanied by his scanty staff, rode on to the parade ground to take the command of this his first independent command. He knew the 64th and 78th before in Persia, and of the latter in particular he was very fond. To tell the truth, the Highlanders were not so partial to the general. A good many of the dry hard-hearted Scots, while they respected and believed in him as an officer, thought him a little bit of a humbug of a man. This was not on account of his religious views. Scotsmen, even if they happen to be soldiers, have the old Presbyterian leaven too strong in them to jibe

at any man who is plainly and evidently a sincerely pious man—even if he obtrudes his piety into greater prominence than they care for. Nor was the coolness of feeling generated by Havelock's strictness of discipline, although the Highlanders in Persia had more than once felt the brunt of his unswerving rigidity. Soldiers, as a general rule, may be said, if not exactly to like, at least to honour, the stern disciplinarian, provided he is always to be relied on for justice, and is not a worrying martinet over insignificant trifles. But the reason why the Highlanders were not exactly enthusiastic admirers of Havelock was this, that the gallant general was just a little windy. He had a great idea of the value of a little stimulating oratory, and was fond of administering doses of it on every occasion where he saw an opening. Now,

the Highlanders did not want constant adjurations to brave acts. A look at the colours of the regiment, with all the glorious names of victories sewed upon the dingy silk, told them more than a Napoleonic harangue from a general. And they knew something that he did not. They knew where Conon, and Lochalsh, and Kintail, and Lochbroom, and Garve, and Dingwall, and Ardross, and Applecross, and the Long Island, and a hundred other places were. They knew of white-haired old men and bent old women, and, mayhap, too, of bonnie Highland lassies away among the glens and round the lochs of the north country; and in their mind's eye they saw the tattered copy of the *Inverness Courier* circulating from shealing to shealing among the clachans, and the proud glances flashing through the tears when news of the Ross-shire Buffs was

read aloud. These men, too, were indeed British soldiers, but they were Highland clansmen as well. They knew of battles which their forefathers had fought, and victories which they had won long before Maida or Fontenoy, long before the kilted men routed the French with their wild rush on the plains of Egypt, and clung to the stirrup leathers of the charging Greys at Waterloo. And so it happened that Havelock's harangues did not move them to the same ebullition of enthusiasm as these performances were wont to rouse their fellows of the service. It was not that the Highlanders were unemotionable ; it was because their emotion lay too deep to be scratched by the harrow of a few sounding platitudes.

This much is necessary in explanation of what took place on this parade. Havelock, with Colonel Fraser Tytler, a gallant scion

of a fine Scottish family, whom he had selected as his quartermaster-general ; Captain Stuart Beatson, a Scot, who was his adjutant-general ; Captain M'Bean, a valiant Highlander, to whom he had entrusted the details of the commissary ; and the rugged-visaged, stern-eyed Ayrshireman Neill, rode out to the front of the line of soldiers. The bright sparkle of tardily-gratified desire was in his eye, as the noble old Christian soldier rode forward when the "present arms" was over. "Soldiers," said he, his voice ringing loud and clear into the throng of scowling natives, who were gazing on the scene from the distance—"Soldiers, there is work before us. We are bound on an expedition which will vindicate the majesty of the British rule, and avenge the fate of British men and women. Some of you I know—others are as yet strangers to me ; but we have

one common purpose, which knits us together as one man. Seventy-eighth, I have led you into action in Persia, and I know the stuff you are made of. I know you will give me no reason to waver in the implicit confidence I have in you;" and so forth, perhaps a little washily. From the 84th and the 64th there went up a lusty cheer. Colonel Hamilton, who had mounted, gave his chief, as in duty bound, a "hurrah," and, cap in hand, turned round in his saddle in the effort to make the Highlanders join in chorus. But they remained obstinately silent, and "Wattie" heard a veteran in the front rank mutter, "Hauv-lock kens brawly fat we can do wantin' a preachment; an' as sure's death, Jock, gin there's ae thing I canna thole abune anither, it's a blether o' words."

Hamilton's enthusiasm met with but one

response. That impulsive Irishman, Mick Sullivan, let a shout out of him that would have wakened the seven sleepers, and was not to be put down at any price. "Why the blazes," he asked, "doun't yez giv' him a 'chiak?' Sure it's aisy to see he manes what he says, an', be the powers, it's mesilf would charge a batthery of horned divils for that ginerall this very minnit!" But Mick's enthusiasm was not catching, whereat he marvelled exceedingly.

Havelock, however, seemed to understand pretty well the idiosyncrasy of the Highlanders, for, as he trotted past Hamilton, he said to him pretty loudly, and with a smile, "Your men like better to cheer when the bugle sounds 'Charge' than when it sounds 'General parade.' We'll try their throats by-and-by." But the half-dozen appreciative words struck home into the inner

heart of the Highlanders better than the oration. Nos. 4 and 6 companies heard them, and broke out into a wild cheer. The grenadiers and the light bobs took their comrades' word for the cause, and joined in like one man. Perhaps, now that it was in the fashion, Mr. Sullivan did not express himself forcibly in the cheering way! And Havelock himself was plainly gratified. His fine face fell into a smile, as he turned abruptly away from the Highlanders, for he knew that the semblance of a bow from him in anything like acknowledgment would check the enthusiasm, as frost does vegetation.

And so at last the order is given to march, and the column tramps its way through the town, amidst the crowds of scowling natives standing in the doorways. They durstn't do more than scowl, with that fiendish withering

malignity so familiar to every man who knew India during the time of the mutiny. Neill had effectually stopped their mouths, if he could not command their eyebrows. But some of the soldiers could not stand even this tacit expression of undying hatred. There was one old villain who scowled a diabolical scowl upon the file on the flank of which Mr. Sullivan was marching. That gentleman chose to consider the matter personal. He had a pretty long arm, and, stretching it forth, with a clenched fist at the end of it, he drove it straight on the somewhat prominent nasal protuberance of the Pandy in question, making the reverse side of his head sound remarkably hollow upon the lintel of the door-post. "Be jabers, ye spalpeen," quoth honest Mick, "I'll larn ye to look cruikit at a Tipperary Highland-man!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE Fusiliers had hardly cleared the outskirts of the town, when the rain, which had kept up for a few hours, came down in a regular deluge. The column was wet through in five minutes, but it tramped on dismally enough along the weary Trunk Road. The Highlanders had left their kits behind them at Chinsurah, and carried nothing but their muskets, ammunition, and great-coats; yet they had not gone far before they found themselves beginning to fag. A discussion arose in the files about the reason of this fatigue evidencing itself so soon among men who, capital pedestrians from

their youth, had proved in Persia their capabilities for long marching. Donald Mackay asserted "that his hunkers felt as gin they were tied in a knot." Alister Mackenzie protested that he "felt it warst in his queets." Donald Ross, again, was less minute. His trouble was that he "couldna wrax himsel' ava;" while young Tam Bain complained miscellaneously of his "hochs." Hector, who was striding along quite at ease, suggested that the sudden fatigue must be ascribable to the length of time—some six weeks—that his new comrades had been cooped up on board ship, which had stiffened their limbs, and had deprived them of the benefit of their previous seasoning. The idea was readily caught at, and the universal prevalence of the sensation appeared to give a colour to it. They plodded along three weary hours, the road toward the end

of the journey getting very heavy from the rain; and at length, after they had got about eight miles on the road, and were close to a mango tope on the left, young Havelock rode back through the column, and gave the order for the night's halt to be made in the tope. Wet and weary, the men broke off under the shelter—a feeble one—of the trees, and sat down upon the wet ground to wait the coming up of the tents. But they never came. The miserable draught cattle had fallen behind, even in this short march, and considerable numbers of the Highlanders had to pass the night without shelter on the saturated earth. The grog came up before the tents, and that was one comfort—a great one to soldiers, although “ye gentlemen of England, who live at home at ease,” may think little of it. When the dram had been bolted, the poor fellows squatted down

again upon the ground, and tried to while the night away in chat, for sleep was out of the question.

“Odd, Donald, this is a hantle waur than the time when we used tae be drivin’ nowt ovr the hills tae the Falkirk Tryst.”

“Deed is’t, Evan, lad, for we aye had the plaid, an’ it was deevilish hard gin we couldna get on the bieldie side o’ a dyke. Fient a stane dyke is there atween this an’ Calcutta.”

“Faith,” broke in a Long Island man, “I used to think kelp makin’ was sloshy wark, put this peats it all to pieces. There was a thack roof apove a pody in Harris, and if he couldna get meat, he could aye get fish.”

“Losh,” broke in an Applecross man, “gin my auld faither was to see his son’s plight the nicht, the auld man would be unco wae.”

“An’ fat for your faither in particular, Donald Morrison?” testily inquired a lance-corporal from Kintail; “it sudna be siccan a stress upon that lang ugly carcase o’ yours, for it’s weel kent you an’ faither afore ye was never naething put gillies tae Applecross.”

“Ye lee, ye muckle brosy-headed prute,” replied Donald, in a great heat; “my faither is weel kent in Wester Ross for a respectable tacksman, an’ it was only oot o’ compliment tae auld Applecross that I gaed forester tae him. Fat for no, Peter Mackenzie, if ye please? A forester is as good as a parish tailyor ony day.”

“Hut, tut, prutt,” broke in a Skye man, “fat ta deevil are ye faa’in’ oot for apout yer trades? Teil a one o’ ye is petter than his napor now; an’ py my soul, if you are all like me, you’re wames are deevilitch toom.”

“Be jabbers,” struck in the irrepressible Mr. Sullivan, “it’s mesilf doesn’t know precisely what a wame manes at all, at all; but faix, if it manes we could all do wid another taste of the crathure, I believe, sure, ye’ll find very few to conthradict you on that point. As for families, now, it’s a pack of silly gossoons ye are intirely. Sure, I, mesilf, Michael Donald Mactavish Sullivan, am a lanyal descindant from the great Brian Och Ubaboo, an’ Brian was first cousin to Goliah of Gath, the first King of Oireland. More betoken, me counthrymen on the grandmother’s side, I would have ye to know that the Sullivans are the ould ancient kings av Tipperary, an’ that if I had my rights, it’s a goold crown I would have on me head this minit, an’ be saited on a trone, instead of on a wet sod with this wet clout on me head. But for all that, me

boys, I'm not proud in the laste, an' sure if iver a man amang ye has a bit of dry tobakky, it's mesilf will be etarnally grateful for that same."

Mick had by this time already established his "charachter" for being a professional wit, and his chaff was taken in very good part. The tobakky was forthcoming out of a spleuchan hidden somewhere in the internal recesses of the Applecross man, and the conclave fell to conversing about the prospects of the campaign.

Next day, and the following, and the day after that again, the column advanced by leisurely marches of but eight miles each day. Havelock believed that the Cawnpore garrison had been utterly massacred, and that, therefore, haste was now needless with regard to it. But a change of tactics soon became necessary. Renaud sent back

word that the Nana's troops were reported to be pressing down the Grand Trunk Road in great strength, and Havelock's own spies, of whom he always kept a number at work, brought him the same intelligence. Renaud's European force had become very much weakened by the number of men who had fallen out. And his natives were dubious; but although the enemy was pressing down upon him in great force, Havelock, for fear of injury to his *prestige*, durst not venture to order him to fall back upon his own stronger forces. There was nothing for it, therefore, but to catch Renaud by a forced march, and afterwards to press on and give the advancing mutineers a check as soon as possible. Accordingly, Havelock's column started from Synee on the morning of the 11th of July, with the prospect of a good spell of marching. It was early

morning when they took the road, and soon the heat was intense, but the fellows by this time were getting into trim, and they jogged along merrily enough. Colonel Hamilton had a capital plan for keeping the Highlanders lively. He encouraged the men to sing on the road. One picked vocalist struck up a solo, and his mates joined in chorus at the proper places—sometimes the officers giving a stave, if they saw the sport likely to flag. Mick Sullivan turned out a positive godsend to the Grenadier company in this respect. He had an extensive *repertoire* of songs, both comic and sentimental, and the honest Patlander never required to be asked to sing twice, but after he had rattled away for an hour or so, he would feign great distress, and make some such appeal as this: “Faix, Mr. Campbell, an’ it’s you that has a

swate vice intirely. Nature surely meant ye for a prime dona" (where Mick had picked up this goodness only knows). "Sure you must know wid sich a delicate pipe as you're blessed wid yersilf, how aisy it is for the troat to go dhry wid singin'. Here's mesilf now. Be the bones of St. Pathrick, if ye was to give me a dollar, it's never a spit I could raise out of me mouth. It's gaspin' I am wid drowth. Sure, Mr. Campbell, an' isn't there a dhrap at all, at all, in the flask to-day?" Mr. Campbell liked a good song, and he liked a good drop too in moderation, and it was 'seldom that the astute Mick failed in what he himself called "working the oracle wid the leftinant." But toward the end of this day's march even Sullivan's high spirits began to flag. The column had marched fifteen miles under a burning sun, and no wonder that the

strongest and most determined were fairly beat. At length the halt sounded at a top near Arrapore, and the poor fellows, almost too tired to eat, threw themselves on the ground and fell asleep without the loss of a moment. Thus the afternoon and evening passed away, and at eleven o'clock, to the surprise of everybody, the General's bugler sounded the turn out. Wearily and lazily the men set about striking the tents and getting ready for the road again, for it was clear enough the General meant to make a night march of it. When the Highlanders fell in they found they had got a new officer. Major North, of the Rifles, had been serving with Renaud as a volunteer, and, having brought back some reports to head-quarters, had asked and obtained permission to attach himself to the 78th. He turned out a great acquisition, for he was a

cheery, willing, kindly soul, and the 78th wanted a major.

A dram all round, and then to the road again. Stumping along in silence under the clear moonlight, the column pushed on doggedly. At one o'clock the advanced guard effected a junction with Renaud's detachment, which, falling in where it stood, joined in the march, occupying the head of the column. Still on, through the chill of the early morning, and while the day was breaking, the General kept his men to their work. On still, when the sun, from its first early beams, asserted its power more and more with a remorseless steadiness, till the heat became grievous again. On, through hunger, through thirst, through fatigue, through what would have been to men less enduring utter exhaustion, till at length Belinda, within four miles of Futteh-

pore, was reached, and the welcome, thrice welcome order to halt was given.

The halt was on a little rising round that commanded a view of the Trunk Road some distance ahead, and the broad plain on either side of it. Great pools of water were thickly studded over this plain, and swamps extended some distance on either side of the road. The General had dismounted a little way up the road, and was sitting under a tree, waiting for his breakfast; while the colonel, with a small escort, had pushed across the plain to reconnoitre. The troops were lying on the slope, waiting for the tents and baggage to come up, and in the meantime the cooks of messes were getting things ready for preparing a breakfast, the commissariat having already come up.

Hector had nearly his fill of marching.

He had been marching in cavalry boots, which had thrown his weight off the proper centre of gravity, and his feet were in a sad state. An investigation showed them to be a mass of chafes and blisters, and, indeed, most of the fellows were in the same condition. They were melting fat and rubbing it upon their feet; others were washing them in the pools; and others, again, too dead beat to do anything but lie still, were doing so with an air which showed they would be very sorry to get up again, for some hours at least. But, of course, there was the cooking to be done, and some fellows, whose hunger exceeded their fatigue, were doing their best to expedite the process.

Mick was a great hand at the cooking. He had a "janius," he was wont to say, in this line, and he was asking Hector and Sergeant Reid laughingly whether they

would prefer a "divvled kidney wid caper sauce, or the hind leg of a bogtrotter curried" for breakfast, when, bang! sounded the discharge of artillery, and whiz! came a round shot bowling along the road. It struck the ground within half-a-dozen yards of where Havelock was sitting, questioning two spies; it whitened the staff with dust, and continuing its course, smashed one of the camp kettles of the 64th. It was nearly the first shot fired in anger Hector had ever seen, and he came near echoing Sullivan's involuntary exclamation of "Holy Jasus!" But there was little time either for exclamation or reflection. The men left their kettles where they lay, the weary sprang up galvanised, the bare-footed men pulled on their boots over the chafes and blisters, and the whole in two minutes' time were getting under arms. There was no need,

now that an enemy was assuredly in the front, for the bugles to sound "the assembly." They did sound, indeed, by Havelock's order, as he sprang to his feet and went to meet Tytler as he galloped in from his reconnoissance. The men, hungry, weary, and foot-sore, were in their places in the ranks far quicker than if it had been a general inspection in barracks. Havelock spoke to Tytler as they walked slowly back, and then young Havelock cantered off to Major Stirling, who was in command of the 64th. Presently a detachment of men of that corps, armed with the Enfield, pressed forward, and took up a position in a copse out to the front, on the left of the Trunk Road. This done, the order was given that the men should lie down without breaking their formation, and get what rest they could till the course of events should develop itself.

CHAPTER XIX.

THERE was not much time wasted. With demoniacal shouts and yells, a cloud of native horse burst over the plain, careering in wild haste down upon the British position. It was clear enough the Pandies knew nothing about the main column having come up, but thought they had only to do with Renaud's little band. On they came, in full confidence of easy victory, brandishing their swords and cheering vehemently. "Faith, I'm thinkin' the fules will deevilitch sune sing tae anither tune," grimly remarked old Macnab, of the 78th Grenadiers; "surely they dinna ken what's in store for them?"

Macnab was right; they "didna ken," but they soon found out. When they got near enough they saw Maude's battery drawn up, waiting for them on the *chaussée*, and the British force quietly waiting for the order to join battle. The Sowars halted, and looked as if they did not like it. But soon infantry came up to their support, and artillery also, and the two guns on the road, and three further to the British right, opposite the Highlanders, began to blaze away briskly, but futilely.

Havelock was in a fighting humour. First blood was everything on such a campaign as this, and he determined to win it. Simultaneously he gave the order for the artillery and the marksmen to open fire, and for the whole force of infantry to advance. The Highlanders occupied the right centre in a line of companies, forming quarter-distance

columns, with the Madras men on their right and the 64th on their left. Steadily, through the swamps and pools, pressed forward the British soldiers, sometimes half swimming, so deep was the water. Maude's guns pelted away pitilessly up the road till the enemy threatened a flank movement, and he had to order them off through the swamp to another position. Then the road was clear for the Highlanders. The Ross-shire men had been advancing in grim silence, "keeping their breath to cool their parritch," as old Macnab remarked.

"Wet work, this," said Corporal Macdonald to his chum, Mick Sullivan.

"Wet is it ye call it, Heckthor, me son?" replied Mick, "be the powers, an' it bates snipe shooting hollow. I'm as damp as e'er a mermaid in the say."

Further dialogue was stayed abruptly. Clear and loud sounded old "Watty's" voice—"At the double—Forward!" The northern men saw what there was for them to do, to take the three guns on the road; and they gave one ringing slogan as they dashed forward. The Sepoy gunners and their supports did not wait for them, but before they got within a hundred and fifty yards turned and bolted like rabbits. Just before they started for this little dash, a great fat fellow, by name Alfred Carnie, who very inappropriately belonged to the light company, was grumbling jocularly that he should have fallen in in the very centre of the company, for the enemy were sure to take aim at the centre, and such a great carcase as his they could never miss.

Poor Carnie was, indeed, missed by the enemy, but a mightier enemy slew him before the

light bobs reached the guns. He ran his best along with his fellows, but he was remorselessly struck down by a *coup de soleil* while panting lumberingly along. Leaving the guns where they stood, the Highlanders who, by this rush, had thrown themselves forward out of their alignment, pressed on more leisurely now, through swamp and copse, till at length they were within fire of the garden enclosures outside the town of Futtehpore. Here the enemy appeared inclined to make a stand, under the shelter of the walls; but their hearts misgave them when an Enfield bullet or two came spattering among them through the leaves, and they skedaddled ignominiously. And now the entrance of the town was within sight, blocked, however, by a barricade formed of numerous carts, tumbrils, and waggons. The 64th had caught up with the 78th, and the

right and left flank of either was upon the road. It was a question of honour which corps should be first in the town, and the barricade was taken at a helter-skelter rush. The honour lay between the light company of the Highlanders and the Grenadiers of the 64th; but, in fact, the confusion was so great that to decide the point would be invidious. The enemy made no stand at this barricade; but, nevertheless, here occurred the only casualty of the day among the British. A frightened bullock, in mad bewilderment, dashed out at the light bobs as they pressed forward among the confused mass of vehicles. It met Major North right in the pit of the stomach, and doubled him completely; then it expended the remainder of its impetus on the hinder end of a Highlander who was taking a near cut over the top of a cart. He went over a good deal

quicker than he intended, coming a "tremendous header" upon the road ; and when he had picked himself up he turned round in hot wrath to revenge, as he thought, on a waggish comrade, the indignity offered to his seat of honour. But he saw nothing but the poor brute of a bullock, although he heard roars and shouts of laughter, that, combined with the contusion both extremities had sustained, made him very savage ; so he doughtily bayoneted the offending bullock on the spot. Once inside the town, there was some little hand-to-hand fighting. The Pandies dodged about among the houses, and had to be driven out constantly at the bayonet point. There was, however, no organised resistance, and the British had it all their own way. In the centre of the street of Futtehpoore a tumbril full of rupees had been upset in the hurry of the attempt to re-

move it. The fellows flocked round it like a swarm of bees, struggling for the money which many of them were fain to throw away before the week was out. And then, while the majority, indeed, pressed forward as well as their exhausted condition would allow (for they were all nearly fainting with fatigue, hunger, and heat), not a few scattered themselves abroad over the village, looting everything of value in small compass, and drinking whatever they could get hold of. When at the far side of the town, a bugler, by some mistake, sounded the halt, and this kept men from pressing forward so briskly as they would otherwise have done. As Captain Beatson, the Adjutant-General, was riding to the front to find out the cause of the delay in pressing forward, he came across a fellow sitting composedly upon the body of a Sepoy, munching away in

evident enjoyment at a species of food something like what the Scots call "scones," which the native troops are in the habit of carrying in their haversack for eating when on service. The officer not unnaturally put the question, "What the devil are you doing there, you rascal?"

"Sure, Captain, jewel," replied Mick Sullivan, for it was he, "it's sounded the halt, and, bedad, I'm having me breakfast. Will ye have a morsel, Captain? It's swate they are, and, troth, I'll warrant them fresh, for I've just kilt the nagur here," pointing with a matter-of-fact air to the dead Sepoy, whose carcase he was using for a seat. Nothing loth, the officer took a bit, but ordered Mick to the front at the double, telling him the "halt must have been a mistake." "Bedad, then, an' I wish it hadn't," said poor Mick, with a yawn and a stretch, as he

took up his musket, and, speaking with his mouth full, limped off to the front, "for it's dead beat I am, and that's a fact."

In the evening Mick had partly "recuperated," as the Yankees say, and was bustling about, looking after stray drops of grog. His comrade was lying under the shadow of his tent, silent and sombre. Sullivan could not bear to see anybody he knew in the dumps, and proceeded, in his homely, affectionate way, to rally Hector out of his dulness.

"Arrah, now, Heckthor, what the divil are ye hangin' yer face for, me jewel? Sure ye fit like a lion all day, and stood up against the sun manful. It's never ill ye're goin' to be, is it, chum?"

"No, Mick, old fellow," replied Hector. "I'm well enough, but I saw a sight to-day that sets me a thinking."

“Och, and what was that, at all?” asked Mick, his curiosity fairly aroused. “Was it anything extry in the looting line?”

“No, Mick; looting don’t trouble me much. Did you notice these blackguards of the cavalry that came down upon us before Palliser charged?”

“Sure an’ I did,” answered Mick; “an’ faix, it was mesilf wished just thin for ould Jackie Lee and a single squadron of the dhurty ould Sthrawboots. Be me sowl, we’d have slaughtered every mother’s son ov them. Och, there’s nivir a sarvice can touch the dhragoons, afther all.”

“Well, but did you notice anything strange about the centre of their front rank?”

“Be jabbers, an’ I did not. Iviry divil of thim samed uglier than another, an’ it’s their own mothers would be ashamed to own the biling of thim.”

“Look here, Sullivan,” said Hector, “I’ll take my oath that I saw that dog Fitzloom to-day, in the centre of the Pandy cavalry.”

“Fitzloom!” ejaculated Mick, in the wildest astonishment. “It’s dhramin’ ye are, me lad. Sure Fitzloom must be snakin’ about in Matheras, or else on his road home to England.”

“I tell you I’m as sure I saw him to-day as I am that I see you now. He was riding alongside the native officer, and it was he who knocked Palliser off his horse. Nothing can persuade me that it was not him.”

“Well, if you’re so sure as that, bedad, I see no use at all, at all, in conthradicting iv ye; but it’s moighty quare entoirely.”

“Queer or not queer, there he was, and——”

“Och, sure ye needn’t say no more. I know what ye mane, and I wish ye every

luck. It's the divil's own pity ye're not in the cavalry, instead of thrampin' on yer tweligs wid a gun on your shoulder. But whatever ye do, don't shoot him if ye can help get at the troat ov the blackguard, if ye see half a chance."

"You need not doubt that, Mick." And so Mick lit his pipe and lay down for the night.

Next day Havelock gave the fellows a rest, which they much needed. He issued an address to the troops, which old Hamilton at the evening parade, read to the 78th, and which, by reason of its terseness, obtained unwonted approval from these critics, while some of the old soldiers found an especial merit in it by reason of the pious allusion which it contained. Next day the column marched onward without opposition, and without any accident of note save a false

alarm, evidently for purposes of plunder, raised by the irregular cavalry, who were acting as baggage guards. When the halt for the day was made, Havelock had this detachment of rascals paraded in front of him. After giving them a jacketting, he had them dismounted and disarmed, and then, contrary to the advice of several of the staff, who wanted them hanged on the spot, the Europeans had the felicity of kicking them enthusiastically off the camping ground. Barrow's Volunteers got their horses, and a good exchange they made, for his fellows had hitherto been mounted on little better than tats, and the horses of the irregulars, although as lean as hurdles, were strong and fairly bred.

Early on the morning of the 15th they were on the road again, and when, just at daybreak, they were coming near the village

of Aoong, the volunteer cavalry, who formed the advance guard, came plump upon a rough redoubt thrown up across the road, masking some guns. These let drive almost right in the teeth of the volunteers, who had to take the open country for it on either side of the road, and came back at a gallop, with a body of Sepoy infantry at their backs. The Pandies thought they had for once fairly routed our fellows, and jubilantly took possession of a hamlet a good way in front of their position, whence they opened fire upon the troops, which Colonel Tytler was getting into position. Renaud was in front with a couple of companies of the Fusiliers, and he went straight at the village at the double. He and his men cleared it in a very brief space ; but Renaud never charged more. A Sepoy bullet smashed his thigh, and he died the day after the troops marched into Cawn-

pore. While the village was being cleared, the artillery had come to the front, and a few rounds from it sent the rascals out of the entrenchment, leaving their guns sticking there. When Tytler got inside the entrenchment, one of these pieces, a nine-pounder, was found bunged up in a very curious way. While the gunner had been "ramming home," a shot from one of Maude's guns had come, and killing the Sepoy gunner, smashed the rammer, and jammed itself with the utmost neatness in the muzzle of the Sepoy gun, which it had split up to the very touch-hole. The moment the redoubt was carried, and the rebel infantry beaten back, there was a grand skeddaddle among the cavalry, which had been hovering on the flanks, with an eye to a dash at the baggage. The dogs fell into a regular panic, and as they galloped off

they threw from them arms, plundered jewelry, and even money. The road all the way from Aoong to Pandoo Nuddes was strewn with abandoned impedimenta of all kinds.

Although the little engagement at Aoong would have been a fair day's work, there was more marching and more fighting to come. After the redoubt had been carried the advanced force, under Tytler, waited for the General to come up, and then there was a couple of hours' halt for breakfast. Then to the road again, for the river Pandoo was down in flood, and the chief was afraid the mutineers would blow up the bridge on the Grand Trunk Road, which would have brought about a complete standstill. The bridge, which in one sense might have been called the key to Cawnpore at this time, was capitally situated for defence.

The Pandoo flowed in a deep gully, with high precipitous banks on the side approached by Havelock. It made a bend outwards, as it were, towards the advancing Britons, and just at the swell was the bridge, approached by a ravine in the bank, and at intervals there were other ravines at right angles to the principal nullah. On the Sepoy side, in the bosom of the bend, there was a flat alluvial tract, and here entrenchments had been thrown up and guns mounted, which raked the bridge and the road for more than a mile beyond it. As the advanced guard came up the road, the artillery from the bridge head suddenly opened upon it. It fell back, and very shortly "officers' call" sounded. Then one detachment of the Fusiliers went off to the right, and another to the left, and dodging up two of the ravines on either side of the

road, speedily lined the banks, and began blazing away with the Enfield across the stream. Maude very soon had his guns in position and at work, and the remaining troops were kept in reserve on either side of the road, waiting for a chance. A very curious accident here befell one of the 78th, showing what a trifle will sometimes cause a man's death. The Grenadiers were lying down to let the enemy's fire go over them, and of course they lay with their heads towards the direction whence the fire was coming. Hector was on the flank of the company, and next to him was a restless fellow named Stephen Lawrence, who never knew how to be still three seconds at a time. Steve must needs try to make himself more comfortable than his fellows, and with this intent, noticing a little hillock about a yard behind him, he reversed his

position, and using the hillock as a pillow, was chaffing his comrades for not making themselves as comfortable as he was. He was a dead man next minute. A round shot, fired at a considerable elevation, fell upon the top part of his head, and smashed to a jelly everything above the nose. He would have escaped if it had not been for his pillow. This was the first man killed among the Highlanders, and the fearful nature of the poor fellow's wound, and the suddenness and close proximity of his death, made Hector for the moment very sick of war. Havelock was a little in the rear when this happened, and riding up to the Grenadiers, he took a long look at Lawrence's body, and then, anxious not to miss a chance, he remarked, "His was a happy death, Grenadiers. He died in the service of his country."

“Bedad, thin, Gineral, jewel, it’s mesilf would grately purfer to live for the sarvice of me counthrie, if you’ve no particular objections,” came a voice from near the right flank of the Grenadiers. Havelock could not resist a grin, and the company burst into a guffaw of laughter, in the midst of which Lieutenant Campbell, with a convulsive effort to look stern, shouted, “Silence, that man Sullivan!” The Highlanders lay there for some little time, making approving comments on the capital rifle practice of the Fusiliers on the banks to the right and left. The gunners at the head of the bridge were dropping like partridges, and every now and then down came a dragoon in the squad of cavalry supporting the gunners. Suddenly there was a flash, a puff of white smoke, and then the dull, heavy thud of an explosion.

“There goes the blessed bridge!” shouted Crowe, springing up excitedly; “we are done, after all!”

But Crowe was wrong this time, slashing officer as he was. The train had been laid hurriedly and clumsily, and all the harm the explosion did was to blow away a fragment of the parapet, and a segment of the roadway on the furthest arch. The moment the smoke cleared away, Maude brought his guns up to the very edge of the nullah and smashed into the thick of the disorganized Pandies at point-blank range. Ten minutes more, and Stephenson, at the head of the right wing of the Fusiliers, who cheered wildly as they dashed on at the double, threw himself on the bridge, and was over it and bayoneting the gunners before they could make up their minds to run away. The Highlanders followed, and deployed

rapidly as they got across ; but there was no enemy left to oppose. They only saw the backs of the horsemen as they galloped off, leaving the gunners to their fate. Most of them were slaughtered as they stood ; but those who were taken alive were uncere- moniously pitched into the Pandoo Nuddee, and there was an end of them.

A mile past the bridge Havelock pushed on his men, and then they encamped, or rather halted, for there were no tents to be got that night. The fellows had been marching and fighting in the noon-day sun, and were dead beat. Biscuits and porter were all the food that was to be got, for the bridge was so narrow that it was far on in the night before the commissariat could get their bullocks up, slaughtered, and served out. There was very little cooking done that night, and the atmosphere was so insufferably hot

that before the morning all the meat that had not been cooked was stinking, and was thrown away in disgust. The majority of the troop fell in next morning without having eaten anything since the day before, save a biscuit or two. But fellows that morning did not take much thought for food. As the regiments fell in in the darkness, Havelock treated them to one of his frequent speeches. He had something to say this time that went to the hearts of all. He had heard, he said, that there were still alive in Cawnpore two hundred and more women and children who had escaped the massacre of the 27th of June. "With God's help," shouted the General, with his hat off and his hand on his sword, "we will have them, or every man of us die in the attempt. You have been sorely tried, men,"

continued Havelock, "but I know the stuff you are made of; and remember the British ladies and the tender infants in the hands of that devil incarnate, the Nana." This time Havelock was successful in evoking a cheer from the Highlanders. He had touched the right chord, and they gave three ringing cheers, and then, without the word of command, went "fours right," and took the road. The day broke, and the sun rose on the hottest day that had been experienced since the column left Allahabad; but there was no flagging. Steadily and doggedly the men tramped on under the burning sun. Now and then a poor fellow threw up his arms, and, dropping his musket, fell heavily to the ground. His comrades picked up the victim of the ruthless sun, and placed him out of the line of march; and then closing

up, pressed on in the sullen, silent, indomitable manner that was the characteristic of this day's dreadful march.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.



